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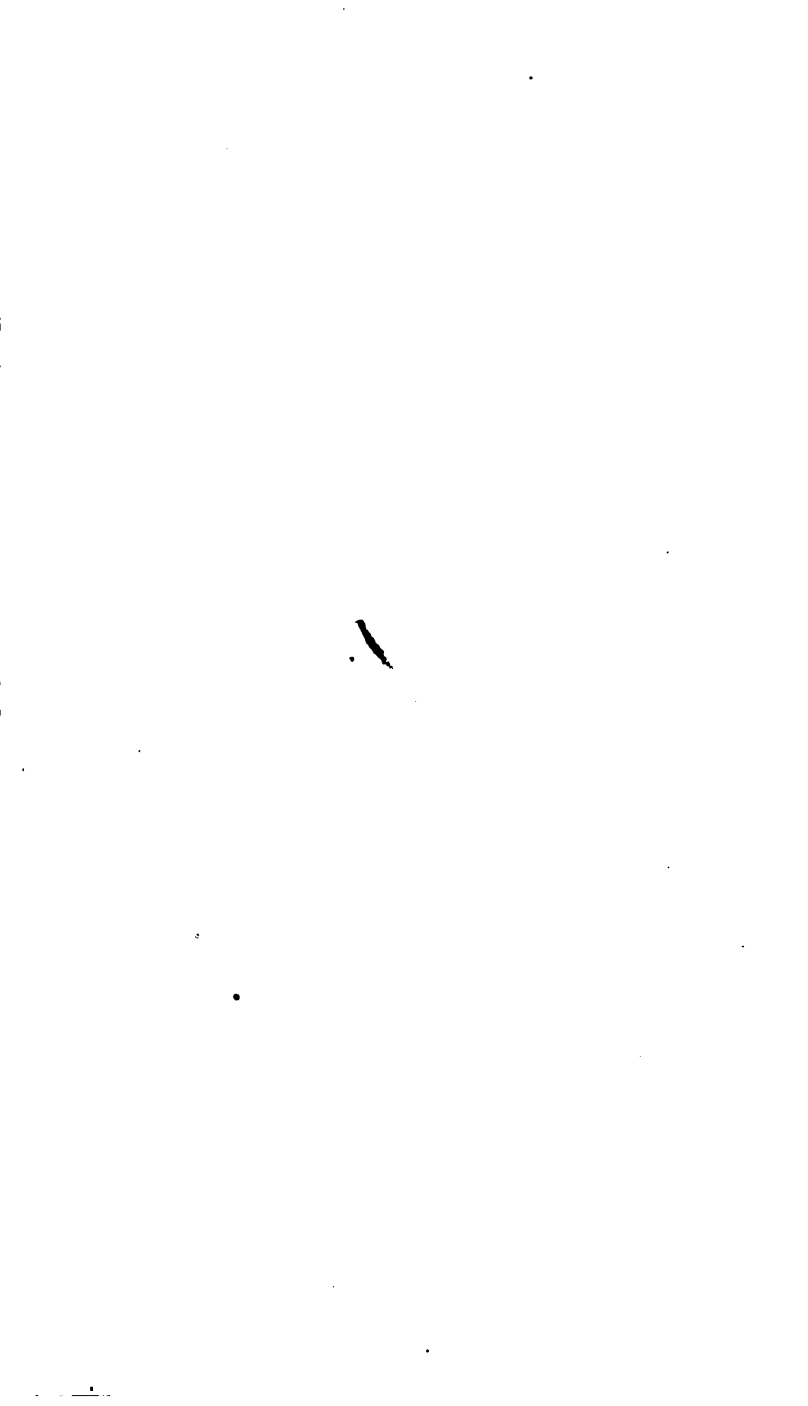
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C H R I S T
ON EARTH, IN HEAVEN,
AND
ON THE JUDGMENT SEAT.

BY
THE REV. J. GARBETT,
RECTOR OF CLAYTON, SUSSEX, AND PROFESSOR OF POETRY.

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S E R M O N S.

SERMON I.

PSALM xlii. 2.—“ My soul is athirst for God, even for the *living God*. When shall I come to appear in the presence of God ?”

WE have no difficulty in apprehending the Saviour as a *living person* ! His circumscription within flesh and blood makes that easy. But it is a great effort of faith so to conceive of God himself, to whom the Mediator leads us. And yet it is for God, the full Godhead, that the soul of the saints, like holy David, longs and pines ! That He is a LIVING GOD will probably be the most awful discovery of the judgment-day.

And that there is great reason,—either in

the nature of things or the state of the human heart, or in both,—for continually bringing this truth home to us, is manifest from the earnestness and constancy, with which Holy Writ insists upon it. For instance, “They heard the voice of the *living God*.” “Hereby know ye that the *living God* is among you.” “He is the *living God*, and stedfast for ever.” “Purge your conscience to serve the *living God*.” “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the *living God*.” I merely cite these passages, that you may see what I mean, for the Bible is full of them! And in almost all the passages in which these and similar expressions occur, full of God and his essential life, you will find the *application* intended to be made of them, and the errors which they are framed to oppose, distinctly marked. It is the senselessness of the miserable idols of wood and stone, which the nations worshipped, though they were the work of their own hands; and this is compared with the Al-

mighty. Or it is the careless insensibility to the divine threatenings, which grows over men's hearts, till they say or feel, "Tush, how should God perceive it, is there knowledge in the Most High?" And this requires to be shaken by the manifestation of his terrible wrath. Or it is the infirmity which prevents us oftentimes from laying fast hold on those glorious promises,—the gushing forth of the *loving attributes* of the Most High,—which sustain the soul of the saints; and this demands comfort and support. Any how, whatever particular form it may assume, the reluctance or natural incapacity to think upon God as *a person*, is, in many ways, at the bottom of an unbelieving or a careless life. From it, and all other deadly sins, may God deliver us!

Now without going into deep and difficult questions about the nature of the soul within us, and the world without us, one or two distinctions are sufficiently clear! We look, for instance, upon trees and flowers, and hills and vallies, and the many other

wonderful works with which the world is filled, and great and various are the delights which flow into our soul from the enjoyment and contemplation of them. Nay, from the manner in which the trees and flowers grow, and decay, and are moved to and fro, and influenced by the winds and light of heaven, and by our own care of them, we attribute to them and the harvests that clothe the fields, not only form and beauty, but a *kind of life* and sensibility. That is, they are not like the dull brute earth, without organised shape, or expression, or change, the antithesis to mind and feeling. But when we talk of their *living*, it is, I need hardly tell you, only a form of speech, in which we reflect upon them the feelings and qualities which are for ever gushing up from the true fountain of life within our own bosoms. But this is all; they have no *will*, no power, to do us good, or to do us harm. They grow, and bloom and die, without thought or even consciousness.

We have towards the stateliest and most beautiful of them all, therefore, no real love, or hope, or fear. We use them, they *serve* us, and no more. They have not a true life, they *are not persons*.

The case is somewhat altered, when from trees and flowers we come to the beasts of the field. Within *them* there is manifestly stirring a mightier breath from God's nostrils, than in those things which merely shine with a *dead* and insensible beauty. They move and act, in some ways like ourselves. They are not mere machines, but they have their choices and preferences, and are not wholly under our power and control. They are often clothed with a strength and savage power, which makes us tremble at their fury. They have a capacity of being attached to us, and in many ways serving and obeying us, with a seeming consent and good will, which inspires a kind of love for *them* in return. There is, if I may say so, a dim and distant resemblance to ourselves, dis-

torted, sometimes fearfully exaggerated, unendowed, save by snatches and fragments, with what is highest and best in us. But yet, there is about them such a shadow and forecasting of humanity, that sometimes we should not marvel if they were raised up to us, by the addition of a faculty or two more; or if we were degraded down to them, merely by stripping us of our noblest powers, and leaving behind the bestial elements! In one word, we begin to love, and fear, and hope from the beasts. *They are a kind of persons, a half-formed obscure image of personality.*

But when we come to ourselves, clearly there is something higher; and what was only dark and shadowy, becomes sharp, intelligible, and definite. *Man has an understanding heart.* He is not a dull and senseless thing. There is a real life in him, a fountain of *motion*, which is always varied and unwearied. He is no slave of the heaven above, or of the earth beneath; bound down to a valley or a mountain, re-

ceiving influences from without, and fashioned by them, this way or that, without being able to resist. No. He is a part of the *ruling* powers of the world. He scans, and is, so to say, akin to all the greatness and beauty around him. His mind is a *mirror*, and reflects *the universe*.

Moreover, he has a *will*, a real faculty to govern himself. He can discern between good and evil, and choose which of the two he pleases, and conform his whole nature to it. He hath a power to make the *future* his own by *hope*, and by *foresight*. He remains master of the past, by that *marvellous faculty* of memory. *Past, present, and future*, a faint image of God's eternity, are bound up in his soul.

He can affect the fate of his brethren of flesh and blood. He can work in them *woe* or *joy*, as it may be, and they can do the same to Him. He is *trusted*, and makes covenants which hold firm and good. He is *loved*, and he is *feared*. In one word, *he is a person, a real, living, acting person!*

Such a being as this *we ourselves* are. Every day of our lives, we are doing or suffering something in the strength of this moral and intelligent nature, and move to and fro, and are energetic springs of happiness and misery to ourselves and others. We know good and evil, and are as gods. It is this which raises us so unspeakably, not only above the senseless clods, but the beasts of the field, whom God hath put in subjection under our feet. It is this, which lifts us at once into brotherhood with those higher spirits, the angels and archangels, whom as yet we see not with our eyes, yet whose equals, in the *capacities* of our spiritual nature, we are, and into whose likeness and perfected nature we hope to grow. Nay, we shall be exalted into a higher nature than theirs, even that, after which they, in their brightness and holiness, are fashioned,—the image of Christ, who is the glory of God!

But, acknowledging this, has it brought us any nearer to viewing God *himself* as

such a person? Yes, brethren, it has. For, in the first place, because this *personality* is evidently *a perfection*, without which anything that does not possess it, like the earth or the beasts of the field, must be inferior to *ourselves*, therefore God must be *a person likewise*. Or he would be inferior to us; though even the very name implies that He is the highest of beings. You *may* indeed imagine a being, of infinite *power*, pouring forth out of his exhaustless bosom, glory, beauty, living things, multitudinous and diversified beyond imagination, such as fill the universe; and yet suppose that he *has not a will*, or a choice, anything of that which makes us to our fellow men sources of joy and hope, dread and misery! But this is not to represent to ourselves a God, but a *monster*,—vast, unwieldy, and infinite, in some sort, in a brute and unintelligent power.

It is *not a God*,—a living, a loving, avenging, awful Deity! Why, in such a case, though the spirit within us is clothed in

dust and ashes, *we* should be far superior in the order of being, to *such a Deity*, with all his immensity.

But, secondly, it is perfectly certain that He hath *made us*, this infinite God, be He what and who He may! However clothed in clouds and darkness may be his throne, and inscrutable his essence, yet He has made us. He hath done it. Not by chance are we what we are! But as the potter fashioneth the clay, framing it deliberately and carefully for the uses to which he designs it. Or as any cunning artist in gold and silver models the instrument or figures which he has planned, so are *we*, within and without, fearfully and wonderfully made by a most thoughtful will and counsel. We are the *workmanship of God!* We bear the marks of his fingers!

Look then at what follows! The workman cannot put into his work that which he has not, already, in his own *mind*. Whatever beauty he gives to the vessel must first be *within himself*. So,

if God has given to us a powerful *will*, the *faculties* to love and hate, and covenant, and reward and punish, all these must first have existed in himself. For it is out of *himself* and his own fulness that He hath breathed them all, with the breath of life, into our souls. And so the psalmist argues: "He that made the eye shall he not see? He that made the ear, shall he not hear? He that teacheth men knowledge, shall not he punish?" It is absurd to suppose otherwise.

But we have yet a stronger argument. We know, from what He has himself revealed to us, that when He *made man*, the last and most perfect of his earthly works, *He made him* IN HIS OWN IMAGE. Exactly as a small picture may represent a mighty landscape. The parts indeed are fainter and smaller; but they are exactly *alike*, only that the one is enlarged into a grand scale. The picture is the landscape diminished—the landscape the picture enlarged. But you can judge

exactly of the one by the other! So, *man was God's image*, and is so still. Of course, in thus saying, we do not forget that he is fallen, and these glorious lineaments and rays of God sorely dimmed and defaced. But still, even without the word in which, as in a mirror, the glory of God is again imaged to us, we can recognize them within our own bosoms! For instance, *holiness and purity*,—as opposed to what soils the heart, fleshly, carnal imaginations,—we discern to be heavenly, and our duty to cultivate them. We know that *love* is due to goodness and uprightness of soul, and *hatred* to what is evil, and, in any way, hath a wickedness of *will* about it. That *truth* is a sacred and holy thing, and that to change the word which hath solemnly gone out of our lips, is infirm and evil exceedingly. That both *mercy* and *justice* are alike to be kept sacred; and that, as the one dealeth *tenderly*, as long as reason shows there is cause for long-suffering, so the other,

when its time comes, must be *stern* and inexorable, and must consume the guilty !

And so men, in deed and in truth, have ever acknowledged, when the pressure of some overpowering affliction has brought out the secret which lay at the bottom of the soul. The most careless and infidel of men, when surprised by a sudden and imminent danger, have called out, " Lord ! save us ! O God ! deliver us ! " Why ? because they feel, at the moment, that he is a *real person*, and, like men, can save, if it so please Him. So, in all ages and countries, the sense of *sin* lays hold upon the inmost soul ; and men throw themselves upon their knees, and lift up their hands, and cry, "*Lord ! have mercy upon me a sinner !*" Why ? because they cannot help confessing that *God*, like man, is a *person*—that He hath *wrath*, and a burning fury, against that which He hates ! That they, who have offended him wilfully, and have merited punishment at his hand, *must cry for mercy*, as a condemned

criminal upon earth craves forgiveness of a judge, or a sovereign. And, finally, because, though his wrath burn like fire, yet, since He is a person, like unto ourselves, it may perchance be turned aside, by his goodness and compassion for the guilty. God, therefore, is wrathful, merciful, loving, holy, truthful, neither promising nor threatening without bringing both to pass—a true and *living* God! an awful and a terrible, and yet a most gracious Being.

Again, all these opposite attributes are combined into an unspeakable oneness, just as *our* different faculties of loving, and thinking, and feeling, are united into *one* person in us—one, yet manifold! The difference is, that in God all these personal attributes are combined with eternity, and infinity. There are no bounds, or limitations, or contradictions, in or to them. He *is*—He is all life—He who was, and is, and is to be. He is *all-powerful*. Heaven and earth rose out of nothing at his

word, and, when He is wrath, all are consumed in a moment, and perish, and come to a fearful end ! He is *VERY truth* ! All that you see, the sun, moon, and stars, shall all pass away, rush into darkness and chaos, sooner than one jot or tittle of the word of God shall fail. He is *all-present*—about our path, and our bed, and in the innermost abysses of the soul, the darkest places within us ! He never slumbereth nor sleepeth. He holdeth the world in his arms, and is not wearied nor wanteth rest ! He is all eye, and ear, and spirit, and worketh and sustaineth, and liveth in all things, from the most glorious star to the smallest particle of dust ! from the insect that lives an hour to the immortal spirit of man, and the seraph that is clothed in glory ! Who can find Him out ? or who can measure his length, and depth, and breadth, and height ? His ways are in the seas, and his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.

Oh! brethren, what a Being, and what a Person, this is to have to deal with! What an awful thing, and yet a blessed, to be standing in a daily, hourly connexion with such a living God as this, far more close and intimate, and constant, than exists between us and any human being whatsoever! What a thought, that *in Him we not only live and move*, and have our being, but that, every day and hour, we are thinking, and acting, and speaking, immediately under his eyes! That He looketh as intently upon us, and careth, every moment, as much about us, as if there was nothing else in the universe to exercise his infinite attributes upon except ourselves! That He is a father to *us*, and we children to Him! He a king, and we his subjects! He a judge, and we to be tried by Him! He a Saviour, and we requiring to be saved from the burning wrath to come! That He is ever dwelling *with us*, and over against us, with his reward in either hand—the crown and the

palm in the one, and in the other the fire and the worm! He, the Lord of all, and we dust and ashes! King, Father, Judge! Oh, but these are *real things* and not *fancies*. Brethren, is he a king? and do ye not obey Him? Is he a judge, and do ye not tremble at Him? Is he a father, and do ye not love Him? Is He a Saviour, and do you not fly unto Him? Alas! the king will punish, and the judge will condemn, and the father will disinherit, and the patience of the Saviour will be tired with waiting, and the fire will burst forth to consume, and there will be none to deliver!

Hear what He saith, brethren, and judge ye, like wise men, whether his words do not sound like the real words of a living person, which will of a surety be fulfilled. "If it shall come to pass, when he heareth the words of the curse, that a man bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart, the Lord

will not spare him; but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses which are written in this book shall lie upon him; and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven!" These words sound like a *real* threat. It is not like a book; but a living person speaking,—a *living God*, who saith of himself, over and over again, "The Lord thy God is a *consuming fire*, even a JEALOUS God." "O house of Israel, are not my ways equal, and your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, according to his way, saith the Lord God." "Repent and turn yourselves from your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin." "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" And now look at other words, full of love and graciousness, and ask your own hearts, whether, as I said before of the words of wrath, they do not come from a *real person*! They strike upon the inmost heart as actings of

spirit upon spirit, of the infinite and eternal One upon his children in dust and ashes, whom he hath made in his own image, after his likeness. God's words *touch the soul*, as a cunning player upon an instrument of music touches the strings thereof, and the soul answers to them. For he that speaks to men's hearts should know what is in them. "Incline your ears, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." "Seek the Lord while he may be found: call ye upon Him while He is near! Let the wicked forsake his way, and the ungodly man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon!"

Again,—“Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will *I not forget thee*.” In

these words is the spirit of infinite love ! You see all earthly affection is but the shadow of it. And so it is throughout. I might transcribe the whole Bible. It is full of the same spirit—all burning, powerful words, real above every thing in this world, piercing as real words ever are, to the dividing the very hearts and reins, and with the character of God stamped upon them, as a LIVING God.

What more can I say ? Surely it follows from all this that a *personal* God, thus ever living with us, and dealing with us, and speaking to us, just as *really* as we hold our daily intercourse with each other, must require from us a similar return ; not a return fanciful and unreal, but such as one intelligent, thinking, loving being is quite capable of rendering to another ! It is a fatal deception, if any among you persuades yourself that when holy writ speaks of *loving* and *fearing* God, it does not use the words as we use them towards each other.

It might indeed be otherwise if God were *not a person* as we find Him to be. THEN we might fear Him indeed, *still*, but as we fear a tempest, for the harm He might possibly and accidentally do, not for *the will and purpose to punish*. We *might love* Him, but not as children love a father, because they know that he cares for them and watches over them. But, only as a way of speaking, as we talk of loving beautiful prospects or flowers, or anything which, accidentally and without intending it, contributes to our pleasure or advantage.

But, since He is *a person*, if we would share in the glorious and everlasting inheritance which He hath made ready for them that love Him, we must give *Him* the same kind of affection as we give an *earthly friend*. Only it must be infinitely heightened and purified, and made intense, in proportion, as far as may be, to the unutterable perfections and divine nature of Him that inhabiteth eternity, and yet con-

descendeth to accept such love as ours ! *There must be a real choice of Him.* It must not be the accident of birth, or the sprinkling of the baptismal waters, but the *clear deliberate election* of the heart, and mind, and soul within us, just as we choose between real things and persons upon earth ! We weigh the world in one balance, and God as He is in Christ Jesus in the other ; the things which our eyes see, which are temporal, and those which faith discerns, which are eternal ; life and death, heaven and hell. And then we choose God, and give up all other things, since both we cannot have ! We fear and love and obey, his grace and holy Spirit, in Christ Jesus helping us, with all our heart, and mind, and strength, which is our reasonable service.

Finally, beware of everything which tends, in the remotest degree, to interfere with this thrilling, awful sense of Almighty God, as *a person ever present*, ever ruling, ever judging, ever caring for us. When

you read any of those books which are so frequent now-a-days, which speak of the wonderful works which surround us in the earth below and in the heaven above; and which unfold to you that marvellous connexion of cause and effect which binds all things together, with a secret and subtle spirit, do not forget that these are *mere names* to mark the operations of God! *Forget Him not in his works.* It is not nature, which is only a word and not a power, but the living God, whose creature and instrument it is, who maketh and sustaineth the frame of heaven and earth.

When you open his holy word, or hear it read or preached, do not separate it from Him. Treat it not as *words in a book*, or as issuing from the lips of a man, or you will quench the living fire that is within it, and the breath of the eternal Spirit which sendeth it forth. The words of the Bible are no more *mere sounds* than promises or threats of men like ourselves,

And as the one make known to us the thoughts and purposes of the *human spirit* which we *see not*, any more than we see God, so the other unfold the Almighty. They are *God speaking, inviting, threatening, loving, judging.*

When you speak, or read, or think of the history of past days, or of your own life, beware of such thoughts or words as *chance, destiny, and so on.* There is *no chance*; it is God's willing, or God's disposing, or God's permitting. For He knoweth and ordereth all things, and without Him not so much as a sparrow falleth to the ground! When you kneel down to pray, imagine not that your words are idle wind, that they have a long way to travel before they reach the throne of Him that sitteth in the heaven of heavens; and that the prayer of dust and ashes matters not to Him, amidst the adoration of the saints, and the shouts of the cherubim and seraphim. The Almighty is close to you; heareth you, looketh at you, and

holdeth the balance in his hand wherewith He weigheth the very hearts and reins. Very precious to Him is the prayer of his servants, which the blood of his dear Son hallows and purifies, and fiercely does his indignation burn forth against the hollow, heartless petition of the hypocrite, and the profane worship of the ungodly.

In his house, in his sacraments, when the water is sprinkled, when the bread is eaten and the wine drunk, the *very God* standeth by you. Nay, He sendeth his Holy Spirit to cleanse the soul, and cometh and dwelleth, by faith, in the hearts of the faithful; a saving, pardoning, comforting, real *living* God. Thanks be to Him for his great mercy that He thus revealeth himself to us. "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea,

though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me."

SERMON II.

JOHN i. 26.—“John answered them, saying, I baptize with water : but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s-latchet I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

It is worth your remarking, from this and many other expressions in holy writ, what little evidence can be drawn from men’s own consciousness or thoughts upon the subject, of the great things which, all the while, God is working in the midst of them. If we except the early dealings of God with his chosen people, when the flame, or the earthquake, or the trumpet,

or all together, were tokens to men's senses of his presence, there is a marvellous *quiet* and noiselessness in his manner of dwelling and working among mankind. He goeth in and out, and none perceiveth. He passeth by, and none regardeth or lifteth his eye from his daily work to watch the footsteps with which He travelleth amidst the great waters. He walketh and He speaketh, and, under the veil of nature, his hand is not discerned, and the still small voice is as though all were silent !

So it was at the time when John spake in the words of my text. Whilst the scribes and Pharisees, struck by the holy sternness, saintly life, and heart-stirring preaching of the Baptist, were moved to think of Him that should come, and were questioning the great prophet before them, about his mission and character, the marvellous thing which God had promised from the foundation of the world, had already come to pass. At that very moment there was standing in the midst of the in-

quiring multitude, the incarnate God himself. They were close to Him, and their eyes fell upon Him, and they touched the garment of Him in whom dwelt bodily, the fulness of the Godhead, and yet they knew Him not. Their eyes were darkened. He was to them, only as any other in the crowd. "There standeth one among you whom ye know not. He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me; whose *shoe's-latchet* I am not worthy to unloose."

But whilst they admitted the power and majesty of his bearing, they little appreciated, and they were little prepared for that *humility*, and self-renunciation, which breathes throughout the earnest reply of the Baptist. It was one of those signs of a heavenly temper to which, by reason of its unobtrusiveness, they were blind, as they were afterwards to the quiet graces of the despised and rejected of men, whose forerunner He was. They saw indeed an awful, awakening preacher, with his

great heart evidently filled with a Spirit from above, and the power of whose words, though he wrought no miracles, smote upon men's souls with an evidence quite as great as they. They saw Him who shook the wilderness, so as it had never been shaken since the voice of Elias had ceased to be heard, unto whom all men flocked, and of whom all men talked, and about whom all men mused, whether *he* were the Christ or not. But they knew not what a meek Spirit was in this great teacher! this they saw not. They had framed to themselves no idea of a *person*, to whose coming all this was but a preparation; one whose shoe's-latchet this new Elias considered himself unworthy to unloose. Having all men's hearts in his hand, he was able, at least, for the moment, to have made himself, not only a prophet, but a king. But, sore temptation as was this to a Jew, to proclaim himself the Messiah for whom his people madly longed, and dreamed that they discerned in the very man who was thus

above his fellows, yet he hesitates not, when they ask, Art thou the Christ? He confessed, and *denied not*, but confessed, I *am not* the Christ. I am not he of whom Moses and the prophets have written.

Art thou Elias? that is, Elijah, such as the fond fancies of the Jews imagined he would appear, in the last times, with a power and pomp worthy of Him who was rapt to heaven in a chariot and horses of fire! And he saith, I am not! Art thou *that* prophet? He of whom Moses wrote, who should be like unto himself, a maker of laws, and the founder and prince of a new people? And he answered, No.

Who art thou, then? What sayest thou of thyself? He said, "I am the voice of one, crying in the wilderness: *Make straight the way of the Lord!*" Observe, "*the voice of one crying.*" "I am nothing but one whose duty it is to *proclaim the coming* of the Just one, to warn, and warn, and warn, and nothing else. Lest the king should come unto his own, and his own

should not be ready to receive him—lest, when He cometh with his fan in his hand, He should find his threshing-floor, laden, not with wheat, but chaff for the burning. I say nothing of myself, my message cometh not out of mine own heart, nor is it devised by my own head. The words I utter are put into my mouth by another who sendeth me. I am but the instrument to give utterance to his mighty breath. I am not so much a man, *as a voice*. Prepare ye the way of the Lord! *Repent ye!* And because it is from heaven, and not from earth, therefore it is not as the voice of man, but of God, which divideth the flames of fire, and shaketh the wilderness of Cades!”

But still those who questioned him were not yet satisfied. There was one part of his conduct which required further explanation. “Why *baptizest* thou then, if thou be not that Christ, neither Elias, neither that prophet?”

The act of *baptizing*, therefore, they evi-

dently considered as a mark of great authority; an act only to be done by one who could exhibit a commission from above. In fact, they connected the rite of baptism with Messiah's coming. It was indeed, already used among them, when heathens were admitted into the Jewish church. *They* and their children were always baptized. But with the coming of the Saviour they connected a more searching purification, and more heavenly waters. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," says Ezekiel, "and ye shall be clean." "In that day," says Zechariah, that is, in the day when Messiah cometh, "there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." So that, you see, they had ground for this expectation, they were right in asking, "Why baptizest thou?"

John answered them saying, "I baptize with *water*, i. e. *with water only*. But there standeth one among you, whom ye

know not." He means to say to them. "I do indeed baptize, and therefore, so far, I do what He whose messenger I am, will himself do hereafter. But I can do no more than sprinkle you with water. I can but dip you in the stream. I do it, because the pure, living water, is a fit outward sign of that *inward* holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. And your souls *must* be cleansed from sin, as your body is from the dust. I would fain cleanse both, *but I cannot*. I can only administer the material element. The sign I can give, but I cannot give *that* which it signifies. My baptism, therefore, is but a poor emblem, and a humble preparation for his. He who cometh after me, and who is now standing, unknown and unregarded in the midst of you, hath power to purify the soul. The Holy Spirit which He shall give unto them who believe upon Him, shall be as a refiner's fire, and, as it searcheth the heart and reins, shall try them, even as silver is tried, and remove

the dross from the purified ore. He, then, shall be the true baptizer. And, though He shall still sprinkle you with water, yet, where there is faith, it shall be a washing with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

You see, therefore, in what consists the immeasurable superiority of our Lord's washing over that of John; even in that inward purifying which He hath the power to convey, and which is the baptism that saveth souls. It is not water only, therefore, though we reverently and mystically use it, nor dare neglect our Lord's command, nor undervalue the Lord's ordinance. But it is *water and the Spirit*, the twofold cleansing, whereby souls and bodies are made pure. "The like *figure*, even baptism," saith Saint Peter, speaking of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, which was to them a typical baptism, "*doth now save us*. But not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God."

The great gift of the Holy Spirit, then,

to cleanse the soul, is the mark of Christ's royal priesthood, and of Christ's Godhead in the flesh. Nay, He hath *therefore* ascended up on high, that He might receive these gifts for men ; and come down and dwell among them by the presence of the Holy Ghost which proceedeth from the Father and the Son.

And such, according to the prophet Joel, were to be the graces from above, by which the evangelical times should be distinguished from those of the elder church. And with this intention he is quoted by the apostle Peter, when the Jews gazed with mingled wonder and incredulity upon the tokens of the Spirit's presence at the day of Pentecost ! " This is that," saith he, " which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass, in the last days, saith the Lord, that I will pour out *my Spirit* upon all flesh. And on my servants, and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit ;" i. e. the meanest of my servants, shall partake

of this great gift! And then He proceeds exactly in the same tone and meaning as John the Baptist. For as He accompanies the promise of the purifying spirit with the threat of a consuming fire, and warns men thus of the danger of rejecting the glorious gift, in like manner speaks the prophet! He balances, so to say, the glories and inward graces of the evangelical kingdom, by the most tremendous tokens of wrath, upon those whom this washing of water and the Spirit should not have regenerated. "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath! Blood and fire, and vapour of smoke! And the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before this great and terrible day of the Lord shall come." Both of them hereby evidently denote, that, in exact proportion to the magnitude of the blessings bestowed, and the glories that are offered in the gospel kingdom, are the woes that wait upon their rejection, and the awfulness of the vengeance which overtaketh

the ungrateful and the wicked. In fact, the fire which, tempered by grace, only purifies, when kindled by wrath, shall consume like a furnace.

But oftentimes the scripture speaketh in terms of *unmixed* joy and gladness, of these times of the Spirit which Christ should bring in! It dwelleth not upon the consequences of his rejection, but of the blessed fruits which He should produce upon the hearts and souls of God's people. "Behold the days come," saith the Lord, "that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After these days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more, every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord! For they shall all know me, from the least of

them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord ! for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

You understand, therefore, brethren, under what a dispensation we are now living, and of which all the prophets prophesied until John, from whose time till the world's end the shadows of the law have departed, and *the reality* of spiritual things doth, in deed and in truth, tabernacle among us.

It is a kingdom, emphatically, of the *Spirit of God*. A Spirit He is and in the Spirit He must be served. Forms and outside things, in some sort, remain as of old. This must be so while man has body as well as soul. But their only service is to *represent* the things that are unseen. They are *themselves* worthless. We assemble in churches, and we bow the knee, and we praise with the lips, and we eat the bread and the wine, and we sprinkle the water, and right it is it should be so. But it availeth nothing to a par-

icipation in Christ's true kingdom, unless it be the heart that boweth down, and the soul that kneeleth, and the whole inner man which, being sanctified by the Spirit through the blood of Christ, worshippeth, with a true worship, Him that dwelleth in heaven and in the hearts of his people. The bread and wine nourish not, unless faith feedeth on the Saviour in the heart !

This is a hard and a great thing to do. And reasonable it is that, being of all things the most difficult, it should be wrought out by the mightiest of all power, —even by the power of God, which cometh forth from Christ, and worketh on dead souls, by the same Spirit which, when the world was dead and void at the beginning, moved on the lifeless elements, and made them live.

You may think it superfluous to call on omnipotence, but no power but this can reach the secrets of the soul or change the heart. For spirit only can reach spirit, and heavenly virtues can only be poured

into these earthen vessels from the *heavenly fountain*,—that is Christ,—and it is by the Spirit that He worketh them in the soul. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good. Make the source good and the water will be sweet. When the spirit within us has been cleansed as with fire, no fear of the rest, it will follow of necessity. As light is *seen*, and sendeth forth beams around it in all directions, so holy deeds, and blessed affections, and godly words, which are the *rays* of a soul which hath become light, will abundantly testify to what is within. “Thou blind Pharisee ! cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are, within, full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”

But, you may say, did not the same spirit dwell in the hearts of the holy men of old ? and was not faithful Abraham, and

patient Job, and holy David, changed by his influences, and illuminated by his light, and drawn to God by his leading, as well as we? No doubt they were; and they earnestly prayed, as we do, that God would not turn the light of his countenance away, nor take his Holy Spirit from them. And every good thought that was ever breathed into men's hearts from the beginning of the world until now, hath been from his inspiration. But still we have an unspeakable advantage over the elder church. Even John himself is less, in knowledge and privileges, than the least in the kingdom of Christ. He, the Holy Spirit, hath never before been revealed as He has been to us, since Christ hath taken unto himself his kingdom, and sent the Comforter and the Purifier unto them that love Him. He hath never been covenanted with such rich and most certain promises to prayer by faith, as He hath been to us! Offered to us He is from our very infancy when we were put into Christ's arms, to old age,

even all the days of our life; ever since the waters of life have flowed over upon his church from the fulness of the Redeemer ! Come and taste how gracious the Lord is. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you ! If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him !" To us alone hath it been granted, who are of the household of faith, that we should be one with Christ, and Christ one with us ; and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, should dwell within us, if we have faith, and change sinful souls and perishable bodies into living saints and heavenly temples.

Are there, then, any among *us* who, with the sign of the cross upon their foreheads, and the profession of faith upon their lips, have still their affections vehemently fixed upon earthly things,—who are not only in the world but *of* it, and whilst they are

called soldiers of God, do indeed labour for the kingdom of darkness? If so, there standeth one among us, great and powerful, whom they know not! They have been washed with the outward water, a mere sign like the baptism of John, but they have not been baptized by Christ with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Their baptism is unto them as no baptism, their circumcision is become uncircumcision! Are there any among us who, unstained by open or notorious vice, are yet utterly strangers to the true *life* of the Spirit,—the boldness of faith, the joyfulness of hope, the trustingness of love, the earnestness of obedience, the self-sacrifice of a cleansed soul which giveth itself to Christ because Christ hath first given himself for it? If so, to them I say there standeth one among us whom they know not; a mighty one, whose real power they have not felt. They have been washed with the outward water, and the words of the covenant of grace have been sounded in their ears, but

neither have *they* been cleansed by the Holy Ghost and by fire. Their baptism is unto them as no baptism, their circumcision is become uncircumcision.

Though Christ be indeed fully come, yet men see and know Him not ! Would that they did, for if men indeed used for themselves and for their children the abundant graces which are stored up for them in the church of the living God ; if they sought the Spirit, which is his gift, wherever He is to be found,—in the holy book, in the blessed sacraments, in prayer, in his congregation, at the bottom of their own souls,—for the Spirit dwelleth in them all,—we might then see men grow in grace as they grow in years after the fashion of their Master. And young and old, being holy, the visible society of christian people might indeed be like a church which the blood of the Lamb hath purchased, and the Spirit of water and fire hath cleansed. It would be a church like a bride in her glory, without spot, or stain, or wrinkle,

or any such thing ! But as it is, we still linger within the *dispensation of the Baptist*, not having entered into the holy house. We require the threatenings of God more than his promises ! Warnings against sin, and dread of the terrible wrath to come. Sorrow, therefore, for manifold transgressions, and a constant mixture of penitence with feeble faith and many backslidings, take the place of that fulness of joy and brightness of promise, and the gifts of the Spirit, which ought to glorify the courts of Mount Zion, and testify among his redeemed the presence of the Incarnate God. All things savour of an outward baptism, and legal bondage, and not of the inward purification.

But still there are many among us whose baptism has not been an outward sign, nor has withered away, like a lifeless thing, almost before the water was dry upon their foreheads. They think of the prayer offered for them when they were brought to Christ and put into his

loving arms! "O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him!" And they can testify that, albeit the gold is mixed with clay, the earthly with the heavenly, yet that the old nature is decaying more and more within them. Again, they remember the next petition, "Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him!" And their conscience beareth witness to them that their love for heavenly things is waxing greater and greater.

Again:—"Grant that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh!" And their conscience again beareth witness that, through Him who strengtheneth the weak, and giveth grace unto the humble, this victory over him that hath the power of death, may rise higher and higher to a final triumph!

Again:—"Grant that whoever is here

dedicated to thee by our office and ministry, may be everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God !”

I am sure that all such are indeed blessed that can say, “*I have this hope* within me. It waxeth, indeed, and waneth, and I cannot always make it burn equally bright. But it never dies away, and it is, after all drawbacks of sin and sorrow, the strength of my heart, and the joy of my life.” And some such there are in every congregation ! many, I hope, here.

Their baptism is a baptism indeed. It matters not when the inward change was *perfected* into the manhood of grace ! The sooner the better ! Yet, whenever it be, it hath now *completed* that birth of the water and the Spirit, by which we enter the kingdom of Him who worketh, in his redeemed, with the Holy Ghost and with fire ! No matter that you cannot trace the moments, or the ways, or number up the blessed influences—too many to count, too subtle to discern—by which

the work hath been wrought, and your eyes have been opened, and ye discern the Holy One in the midst of you, whom the Baptist preached, and see his power, in the fruits thereof within you! It is done, and that is enough! Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven! "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and ye hear the sound thereof; but ye cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

They, and such as they, feel and understand the exhortation of the apostle in the epistle of to-day. "Rejoice in the Lord, alway, and again I say, rejoice." And they live under the awful and thrilling consciousness of the Lord's coming, worldly ambitions wax faint within them, and the eager passions of the natural heart are chastened into a sober and thoughtful spirit! And men behold and confess that they live like pilgrims and strangers upon earth — who are travelling to another

country—that is, a heavenly. They subdue all things in them to this pilgrim spirit!—sober, patient, and enduring! “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” Hence, the soul being filled with the contemplation of divine things, all happiness that is measured by time, and discerned by sense, fades away, they hardly know how, by the side of an overwhelming eternity, and the light of Jerusalem which is above. They are, therefore, *careful* for nothing on earth. That is, they are not *over-anxious*, not consumed by an unbelieving solicitude, for earthly goods and blessings. He that careth for the young ravens that call upon him, and clotheth the lilies of the field beyond the regal splendours of Solomon, will not forget the souls that he has redeemed, and bought, for an eternal inheritance, by his own blood. “The *Lord is at hand.*”

They know by the faith which enables them to cry, “Abba! Father,” that his

ears are indeed open unto his children's prayers, and that the incense of his temple on earth was a thousand-fold less grateful to him than the prayers and praises of his saints. They therefore come boldly, through the blood of sprinkling, unto the throne of grace. They live in prayer, and prayer lifteth them up, beyond earthly sorrows, unto the heavenly places! And they behold Christ at the right hand of God, and they rejoice therein, with an exceeding great joy, as they who have found their Lord.

“ In everything,” saith the apostle, “ by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” One blessing, the greatest of all, they have attained, they are at peace! They need not wait for the coming of the judgment-day, when the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary shall rest for ever. *Their peace is come already.* Their Lord has raised up his power, and come among them, and hath with great might

comforted and succoured them. And so cometh to pass what the apostle confidently and gloriously declareth: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen. So be it.

O Lord, raise up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us, and, with great might, succour us; that, whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us, through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

SERMON III.

JOHN i. 29.—“ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.”

So spake John the Baptist, the fore-runner of the Saviour, as he pointed out the Christ to his disciples. So spake the law of Moses in all the sacrifices which it ordained to its worshippers, the types and shadows of Him that was to come! So speak the saints and apostles who beheld them all fulfilled in the person of the blessed Jesus. “ Behold,” they say to us as we ask the way to the Saviour, “ *the Lamb of God.*”

Ponder these words, for indeed they

convey, in a manner as expressive as can be conceived, all that is proper and peculiar to the Gospel scheme of mercy. They announce all that distinguishes it from every other message, and makes it what it is, *the Gospel*. I say this, because you find a great many persons who are called Christians, who think they are so for holding belief in certain points, which though they do form a part of it, and are found in it, yet do not make up its essence, or constitute its *distinguishing* character. They forget what the *real thing* is which makes the Christian what he is, and constitutes him a being apart from all others !

Now, of course most men believe in a God, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, and the supreme King and Governor in heaven above and in the earth beneath ; and perhaps they think this is a great thing to do. They make this belief their religion. But a man who did not believe this, could scarce be considered a man at

all! Because all nations, in one way or other, have confessed this great and infinite truth! And to be *conscious of a God*—to see *Him* in whom consists the world's unity, as a *necessary fact*, without which nothing else could be—is one of the main differences between men and brutes. So that a belief in a great God, though it be one part of a Christian faith, is not enough to make him a Christian. It only makes him a man, and gives him a place among intelligent creatures!

Again—to believe that this divine power, this mighty Being, that filleth all space and all time, has a real care and concern for human things! To believe that with countless and ever-open eyes, He is present everywhere, nay, that, being *all eye and ear and knowledge*, He exercises a vigilant watch and guard over us; that He so orders the course of things that all may discern that vice and wickedness are the object of his hatred, and virtue and goodness loved and cherished by Him,

is, of course, a step further, and establishes a *moral* relation between man and God. But this is, after all, to do no more than the very heathen, long, long ago, did before us.

We have joined morality to intelligence, and made ourselves *moral intelligences*, by this belief in *God's character, but no more*. Nay, we may go beyond this, and recognize *distinctly, as a separate and peculiar power*, the voice of a condemning conscience within us—conscience the voice of God, the awful unrelenting judge which sits within us. We may infer from thence, that our sense of right and wrong is not to end in speculation, but in action, and that there will be a judgment to come, and yet believe no more than the heathen firmly held. This is no new thing, but held by all men ever since the world began. That a punishment, severe beyond thought to conceive, but rigidly just, was laid up everlastingly for the wicked after death, and bright heavenly mansions, surpassing this earth as much as

the sun outshines the darkest clouds, for the spirits of the departed good, was universally allowed. This, solemn doctrine and great truth as it is, was ever foreshadowed by the instinct of the secret heart, and inward nature of man. No man, therefore, is a Christian, for believing thus much. For as far as this mankind were led by the light of the natural conscience.

Again. If you believe, in addition to this, that Christ Jesus was a divine prophet and teacher, sent from heaven to instruct men in their duty to God and to each other, and to teach them, by clearer rules than ever they had before, how to walk so as to please their Maker, you are getting nearer indeed to the mark, but still you have not reached it. As to confessing Christ to be a divine teacher, who can do otherwise with a heart and understanding within him? It would be very hard indeed for any one who had ever read the Scripture through, and seen how infinitely more pure and beautiful its lessons are,

than any other writings whatsoever, which the wit of men, the best and holiest, ever framed, to deny this. Nay, to be a Christian is a better and greater thing than this comes to.

What is it then to be a Christian? What is the Gospel? Why this it is, which you will confess is very different. It is to believe that Christ is the Lamb of God. That all the sons of Adam are by nature perishing sinners, lying deservedly under God's wrath and indignation, and, by reason of the infirmity of their nature, and the wickedness of their hearts, without *the power* to save themselves, even if they had the will! It is to believe that in order to rescue them from the curse, God sent forth his own eternal Son, very God of very God, to take upon Him our flesh, and to sojourn among his guilty creatures, on his errand of unspeakable love. It is to believe that to reconcile eternal justice with infinite mercy, this holy, spotless, and divine Being, poured out

his blood upon the cross. And that, by this precious blood-shedding, and by nothing else, our souls are washed, and our sins are pardoned. Nay, it is not only to *believe*, but to *live that faith*, and make it the spring of the soul's whole being; to come to God, with weeping and mourning for our sins, as a burden not to be borne, and a stain not to be washed out, save by this fountain of unspeakable love. It is to ask for pardon at God's hands, *solely* for the sake of Him who has done such deeds of love for us; and, by his grace assisting us, to take up his cross and follow Him in lowliness of heart and spirit, till having died and suffered with Him, we shall at last reign with Him. This is the Gospel, brethren, and *this is to be a Christian*. Here it is all contained, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*"

Now, if this be true, evident it is to every one, that the faith of a disciple of Jesus, and his vocation in this world, is

awful and solemn indeed. Full of comfort it is, and of holy joy and of all things that can raise a fallen soul into better things, and heavenly hopes and promises. But still it is so grave and serious as to banish, at the very mention of it, all worldly and carnal thoughts, and make the heart and soul pause and falter within us, at the responsibility which it lays upon them. You who have been so called, think what it implies,—Sin, and the curse of sin, even death eternal laid upon us all! The world in which we live, an evil, guilty, and condemned world, out of the midst of which we must be snatched, if snatched at all, as men touched by the plague, from the midst of the dying and the dead! The price of our remission not silver and gold, or any such valueless dust of the earth; no, nor anything which the brightest worlds out of their treasury of *material* glories could furnish! It is the precious blood of the Son of God shed in pure mercy on our behalf! The soul within us, as we believe,

is *leprous* with sin, only to be purified by that Holy Spirit, which is the fruit of redemption, and which applieth the blood of the cross to our souls ! Our heart is unacceptable to God, yea turned from Him, till it is made anew within us, and constrained by a heavenly force to love Him !

Then over and above this, look at what necessarily flows from it. All the lusts and vanities of the world, and the world's god, solemnly renounced, and a constant war to be waged by the redeemed, against that sin which ruined man, and made Christ die to save him ! Nay, still more, an universal and abiding love to God, and love to man for God's sake, and a spirit full at once of a humble sense of its own unworthiness, and a devoted affection to its divine Deliverer ! Such are the solemn things we mean, when we talk of Christ and the Gospel.

Let those who can, reconcile such thoughts as these with lives spent in the service of sin. Let those who can, reconcile the struggle after deliverance from eternal

wrath, which is the end of the Christian's life, with the idle pursuit of pomps and vanities, lighter than the air, and fit only for beings who are born and framed to laugh, and dance, and sing, if such there be anywhere in God's wide creation ; but unfit for spirits in a state of trial, and with awful capacities for moral good and evil. Let those who can, reconcile the division of the heart between the world and God, and that spirit of indifference, neither hot nor cold, to spiritual things which marks most men,—with the love of a crucified Saviour, and gratitude to Him, who, as they themselves profess, has saved them from no less than the bitter pains of eternal death.

The fact is, that try as long as you please, you cannot reconcile them, dear brethren. Yet the life of most of us, or at least, too many, is spent in an endeavour to do so, and in a hard struggle to bring about what cannot be. I mean this. There are very few within reach of gospel truth, few, however given up to gain or pleasure,

very few indeed, I may say, who have not, every now and then, a startling sense of something more awful about their state and condition *as Christians*, and *merely as such*, than in their every-day conduct and life, they willingly allow. Usually, their sins lie about their soul like a thick veil. They hide from them the *awful* part of the world to come. They only allow them to see the least startling portion of it, and so long as by name and a few outward observances they can keep up the loose general notion of being saved by Christ, though *how* they hardly know, they are quite content. A changed heart, a spiritual life, a war and struggle with sin, as of all things the most dreadful, an earnest, real love to Christ, such as men feel towards them who save their lives, a love constraining them to proofs and acts of affection,—anything like this, anything *solemn* or *terrible* or stained with the *awful marks* of a Saviour's blood-shedding in their calling, they keep out of sight.

But, not unseldom comes an awakening. Conscience becomes ungovernable, and breaks loose, like an unchained lion ! They have glimpses, as by a flash of lightning, of fearful things *in the distance*. In the gloom there is a sense of terrible light. They hear the threats of Almighty God, "Awake O sinner, or thou shalt die, thou shalt die." They look up and see Christ Jesus bleeding on the cross, a monument to men and angels, of the deadliness of sin. And when this is so, they feel from the bottom of their souls that they who are saved by a crucified Saviour like this, must themselves be *crucified* ; that the *atoning blood* cannot save a soul about which carnal delights are clinging, and which hath not in it the solemn sense of a washing by blood.

I do not mean that like Him they must bleed and die on the accursed tree, though even in this the noble army of martyrs have followed their Lord and Master. But they have a feeling that sin must be slain within them, if they would be like Him.

That the world must be crucified to them and they unto the world, that they must die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, if this is to be their saving. Am I wrong in saying so? am I wrong in supposing that such thoughts as these do sometimes cross the careless, idle, lukewarm Christian? Am I wrong in thinking that at least a *suspicion creeps in* that there are in them, and around them, and about them, terrors and solemnities more than they love to think of? Ah, dear brethren, examine your own hearts well on this point. A voice from within will tell you, that something warns them that faith in Christ after all is not a word, or set of words, *but an energy and a power* within the soul. They have an instinctive sense that it is a life to God, an inward spiritual life, the reality of which is confessed by the very opposition of the heart to it. They see that the one thing needful,—the setting God and Christ far above all things else,—is a *real* requirement of God, and an actual want of the

perishing soul. Sure I am of this. Men, if they have eyes in their head, must discern clearly, at all events, that all this follows, as a matter of necessity, from holding out Christ as a sacrifice for sin, and pointing Him out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

They may avoid these things so long as they keep out of sight their *dying* Lord, but no longer. They do not think of *Christ crucified*. Be it so ! But bring *this* directly before them, tear the bandage from their eyes, and make them look up to the Son of God, holy, harmless, undefiled, really pouring out his blood upon the earth, and that for them, because without it they must perish ; and they confess the difference. The look of the world is changed in their eyes, *now that the stain of blood is over it all !* Not only does their conscience tell them, but reason and common sense, that *if* this be true, and this the only ransom of souls, then all that ministers preach, and the Gospel speaks,

must be true too, not words, but *real things*. They confess that sin must indeed be an evil, great beyond all thought to conceive, or tongue to paint, and that the turning of the heart from God is the depth of shame and degradation, as well as the height of danger. It is clear by this light that the ruin which awaited the souls of men, must have been great indeed before so bright and glorious a Being would ever have stript Himself of his divine raiment, even the light which no man can approach unto, and bowed down from his throne in the heaven of heavens, to endure the extremities of all the evil which could be laid on flesh and blood.' It is utterly impossible, *this* being granted, to conceive that beings so redeemed, could be permitted to think just as little as they pleased of their divine Benefactor; to give themselves up to serve the very world which nailed Him to the cross, or to the sin from which He came, by this fight of blood and soul-rending agony, to set them free.

Nobody can doubt all this, who really believes and discerns that Christ, God and man, bled on the cross to reconcile man to God.

And *this* is the secret of the offence of the cross. This is the real reason why you find men's hearts rising so much within them, at the setting forth of Christ crucified. This is why they grow tired and weary of that glorious mystery into which angels desire to look, the glory of which resounds through heaven to all eternity. It rebukes them. It humbles them. It touches the root of human misery,—the inborn love of self and sin. It makes the world neither a market nor a ball-room, but a solemn trial place for immortal spirits, where souls must strive and wrestle for life and death. Here is the true state of the case, and if this real practical consequence did not follow from it, men would no more object to looking on Christ as the Lamb of God, than they would to looking upon him merely as a better sort of moral

teacher. He would not, being considered apart from all this, and, so to say, *cleansed from those terrible blood-stains*, disturb either heart or soul within them.

I wonder indeed, that it never strikes Christians who know never so little of the deceitfulness of the heart, that it is very little to be trusted in what regards itself, and that we are very poor judges of our own deservings. It is strange they see not that it is a very miserable reason, and very like a delusion of Satan, to turn from the humbling parts of the Gospel, because, forsooth, we think ourselves not so bad or wretched as it makes us. When, if the question be put, no one will dare to say that God, the great and holy, is the object of his love at all by nature, or deny that, if the truth be told, he admires the world and himself a great deal more. The world, even on his showing, being full of sin and of wretchedness, and He whom he does not serve, the infinite and the Almighty maker of the earth and all things in it, a God,

living and true, King of kings, and Lord of lords. And yet with this plain fact before him, a man does not like to be reminded of it, because it *humbles him*, and troubles his conscience, and banishes peace! Surely this cannot be good and right. This is not a sign of spiritual health, or even of common intellectual truthfulness.

Again. That he should own Christ as his only Saviour, and yet almost abhor sometimes to be reminded of the love He owes to Him, and the holiness without which no man can see the Lord. Aye, that he should loathe it, not because the Gospel does not plainly say so, for that is not to be denied, but because, forsooth, he must give up something for it,—the world or the flesh, or the worship of self,—is utterly self-condemning and contradictory. Surely this is not a sign either of a sound heart, or sound head, but the contrary.

“Peace, peace, where there is no peace!” how our evil hearts love this! What contradictions and self-condemning follies will

they not commit in order to accomplish it! Let death, judgment, and the world of woe come by-and-bye; never mind, if we can but sleep now. A little more rest and a little more slumber. Peace is what we want. If it can be reconciled with future safety, well and good; but any how peace! Alas for the delusions of Satan! Alas for the desperate unconquerable sin of the human heart! But if you really looked on Christ as the Lamb of God it could not be so.

Believe me, brethren, it is an excellent rule in spiritual matters to be sure that what gives us pain is good for us. The limb is unsound which shrinks from the touch. If anything in the cross humbles you, be sure it is true *for that very reason*, that you want humbling. If anything seems to exalt God at your expense, exalts the holy and eternal that is, at the expense of the earthly and sinful, embrace it for that reason as a certain truth. For what is dust and ashes to Him that dwell-

eth in the heaven of heavens? If anything in Christ crucified seems to be over solemn or too opposite to man's levity and folly, be certain it is for *that very reason* true. For, other things apart, God would never have put his own image on our souls, nor have made them awful in their immortality, without intending them for better things than sordid gain, or brutal pleasure, or idle childish baubles. No, no; let eating and drinking, and vile pleasures, and idle toys, be given to the beasts that perish. Let gold and silver be for those who are willing to perish with them. Heaven, and God, and life eternal for immortal souls. The Lamb of God has died for us, and in our stead. Our earthly carnal fetters are shaken from the soul, and henceforth it rejoiceth, like a giant, to run its course to heaven!

Dear brethren, I set these great things before you as flowing from the doctrine of Christ crucified, not because I think you do not know them, but because I am sure

that we all require to be reminded of them. It is indeed certain that keeping the Lamb of God before our eyes is the only way to do it. Without this landmark we shall soon lose the way to heaven. Never forget that this is the faith, and none other, into which you were baptized, even the sin-renouncing solemn faith of Christ crucified. You were signed at that time, with the sign of that dreadful cross whereby we are redeemed, as a token of that profession which you were to follow. It was a pledge that you would not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but would manfully fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end. The prayer for you was, that all carnal affections might die in you, and all things belonging to the Spirit might live and grow in you. That by God's grace you might have strength and power to have victory, and to triumph against the devil,

the world, and the flesh. That you, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, might crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin. So that you see that what I have been saying are no words or things of my own invention, but the words of Christ's holy Catholic Church from the beginning. They are the very words and vows of your own baptism. You see, beyond dispute, that for a man to be a Christian, in any real practical meaning of the word, is to embrace the faith of Christ crucified, and to lead a life of holiness to Christ's honour till his life's end—being one with Christ, and Christ being one with him !

You see, likewise, how very foolish as well as wicked it is, in those who have been baptized into the name of Jesus, to talk with scorn of a renewal of the heart, as a heated fancy, and a dream of enthusiasts ; of devotion of the heart and soul to God as unnecessary, and breathing a

fanatic spirit ; and of redemption through his cross and passion, and renouncing all other but Him, as things not to be heard of with patience ! Why all this is the loud clear declaration of holy baptism, a belief without which we cannot so much as enter into Christ's visible kingdom, much less win the crown laid up for them that love Him. To deny this vow, to retract these solemn promises and professions, I know would be farthest from your hearts ! And yet only look at the world about us ! And say who would think, who would ever guess, that the thoughtless, worldly, earth-seeking crowd who fill it, were immortal beings, dwellers, *all the time*, in heart and soul, where Christ sitteth at God's right hand ; sworn to hate the world they love, and serve the Saviour whom they despise ?

And notwithstanding, Christ, so to say, hath striven to make it impossible that men should ever forget that they are servants of the cross, and bought with blood. For

that they might not cease to know that the child of God is an earnest, thoughtful being, bought from death by blood, and counting all things loss for Christ; that the spiritual life might not die for lack of food, nor the union of the soul with the source of strength be broken; He has instituted a second sacrament, of which, by the memory of his dying love, he entreats all his disciples to partake. Never, never, could they forget, as they do, that the world to which they give themselves is God's enemy, *in which* we must live, but *of* which we must not be,—never could they forget that their only hope of mercy is God's free gift in Christ Jesus their Lord,—never could they forget that it is impossible to paint sin as too dreadful, or the love of Christ as too wonderful, or man's own infirmity as too great,—if with humble, contrite hearts, they always came to those holy mysteries. It is not the occasional form, the empty rite which some men make it. It is not the super-

stitious accompaniment of a death-bed, to act as a spell or charm upon the departing spirit ! It is the constant food of the soul to the faithful partaker, that flesh and blood which are meat indeed and drink indeed, even the blood of Christ applied to the soul. Solemn indeed it is, and speaks to us of awful things, ever setting forth the Lamb of God ; and this is why men shrink from it. Too often they refuse, not out of true humility, which always seeks the Saviour's feet and Saviour's presence, but because the heart is not with Him ; and, as I began by stating, they do not like the Gospel, *as it is seen in all its glory* at this table of the Lord. But then, think of the comfort, the joy of it, the strength which it communicates to the believer in his weary pilgrimage, the taste it gives the heart of perfect union with Him in whom is life ! There is nothing which the world can offer, which the soul that has ever tasted it, would exchange for this. To this blessed

feast we, as ministers of God, invite you all, whenever the holy table is spread ! We, for our part, are ready ; and according to our office, we bid you in the name of God to the feast of love. We call you in Christ's behalf ! We exhort you, as you love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy communion.

If you feel yourselves, as indeed you are, poor perishing sinners, come now there, and come ever, with your brethren ! Let the scales drop from your eyes till, like the eyes of eagles, or rather of seraphs, they look through faith on the things unseen ! Behold Christ set forth before you upon the cross, as your pitiful and most merciful Saviour ; and yet, at the same time, reigning in heaven and with his shining garments still sprinkled with blood, still the Lamb of God ! If you long to taste of his mercy, and see how gracious the Lord is, come and take of his body and blood, in faith, looking through the perishable elements to Him

who is the life, and nothing doubting of his presence and his love, as he himself has commanded. If you wish to see and feel what a solemn vocation a Christian's is, and to testify before the world that you are disciples of Him who bled for sinners, trusting only in God's mercy through Him; come to the holy table, and deny not your souls the heavenly feast! Lift up your eyes, and behold, manifested therein, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!

SERMON IV.

PHIL. i. 11.—“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

AMONG many disheartening things, I know nothing, dear brethren, more disheartening than this to a minister of Christ. He is earnestly bent on the improvement of his flock, and his heart rejoices at every step which they make in the spiritual life, and is grieved at every falling back. Yet he constantly finds in those even who *profess* themselves true disciples of Christ, a fearful insensibility to the absolute necessity of a *growth in grace*, and an *advance*, day by day, in christian holiness.

I know not how it is, but Satan does contrive every day, to turn the blessed doctrines of the gospel, salvation through Christ Jesus, and that through faith only, and a free bounteous pardon, into the ruin of the souls which you confidently hope they will be powerful to save. Faith, indeed, and its strong power, they are willing enough to confess as glorious things. But the moment you press on them what the word of God insists upon in almost every page, *holiness and obedience*, they begin to resist ! They turn it off with ingenious excuses, and so free themselves, to a great extent, from all that is really *painful* and difficult in taking up the cross and following Christ. If you speak of the bounden duty of keeping God's will always before our eyes, the answer is, "Certainly ; but it is hard to do, and we do it not as we ought, perhaps no one ever did." Or if you speak of gentle, loving tempers, "Certainly, if God's Spirit will enable us ; but

we are infirm in these matters, and cannot do as we would. No doubt they *are* graces."

Or of patience in tribulation and rejoicing in sickness, "Surely it *ought* to be so, and we partake of it *as far as we can*; but then we have not always the grace to do it." In fact, christian men and christian women are very willing to wear the crown, but have a great objection to the labours and struggles of the spiritual battle! They hope to be saved by grace, and are very ready and loud in professing it. And then, if they are manifestly deficient in those tempers which God requires from all who accept it; they will not attach the blame to themselves; to their own slothfulness, their own lack of love, their own reluctance to take the yoke of holiness upon them. They try to throw it all upon God, for not giving them power to do that which they have no mind to attempt. It makes one's very heart ache to hear all this from the mouths of those who would be greatly offended if

you insinuated a doubt whether they considered the care of their souls the one thing needful. And to hear it, not as expressive of christian humility, giving the glory to God in all things, and abhorring itself in dust and ashes, which would be becoming ; but evidently, as an *excuse* for the *lack of the mind which was in Christ Jesus*, and which must be, whether we like it or not, in us too, before ever we can enter the presence of God in glory.

Nor, in speaking thus, am I requiring that perfection which no man can attain unto in this world, and with this body of sin hanging heavily about him. No ; but only a *constant, earnest labour* to obtain it, and to become, in our measure, what He who is our example is. I am not asking from the lips and hearts of Christians, a claim to graces which they do not already possess, and cannot justly call their own. No ; but instead of that mode of speaking which I just now described to you, I would fain hear some such sentiments as these ;—

“ True, I acknowledge it ; love, gentleness, joy in tribulation—*they are* the fruits of the Spirit, they are the image of Christ ; and true it is that they ought to be found *in me*. I fear indeed that they are not so, but God forbid that I should lay the fault of it on Him who hath bought me with his blood, and promised to renew me by his Spirit. It is mine own fault and not his. Nay, but I must strive and struggle to attain all this, and, God helping me, so I will. I must beat down in my heart all that rises up against this bringing under to Christ of every imagination. I am sure that if I do I shall prevail, for He is faithful who hath promised. He will not deny himself, but will glorify his strength in my weakness. Meanwhile the *sin is wholly mine own, and bitterly do I mourn over it.*”

Now this I call a *christian* manner of thinking and speaking ; whilst the other, from whatever lips it may come, is, in the spirit with which it is usually pleaded,

utterly carnal, and unfitting a heart which has come in earnest to Christ !

And now let us see what assistance we can derive from the text in illuminating our minds on this growth in holiness. The apostle is writing to the Philippians whom, by his preaching of Christ crucified, He had brought from the bondage of Satan unto God ; and his purpose is to uphold and encourage them in that heavenly road which they had begun to tread. Observe, then, how he speaks ! They had, you know, embraced Christ ; taken Him as their Saviour, professed themselves his servants, and laid all their hopes on Him ! As some, I would hope *many*, among you may have done, and then perhaps, unlike the Philippians, stood still ; making no progress, and supposing that, when you have got thus far, there is no further change to be wrought within you.

Not so, however, says the holy apostle. He considers this, not as the whole work of the christian life, but only its *commence-*

ment,—the *foundation* upon which a great deal was to be built. “I am confident,” he says, “of this very thing ; that he who hath *begun* a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.” Begun, observe, although they had already shown, by many good and holy deeds, that their faith was *a true and living one* ; a power and energy, and not a word. Yet this was not to remain where it was, and then the soul, when they came to die, to be transformed *all on a sudden* and at a stroke, as many seem to suppose, into that angelical holiness which is to fit it for God’s presence ! *Not at all !* But it was necessary that, by the influences of the Spirit, it should grow and grow, and, year after year, be clothed with more and more of the gospel graces, till, being finally freed from all remainders of sin, it should be presented, pure and without spot, before the throne of the Judge !

You see, therefore, beyond a question, that the apostle takes for granted, that if

a man *be truly converted*, and have the living seed sown in his heart, it must ever be growing and ripening, and he be waxing holier and holier !

Then observe another thing ! The apostle knew very well that this was not the case with *all* the members of the church to which he was writing, or indeed of any church. Yet he did not, at a distance as he was, like to offend them by the appearance of harsh, or unkind, or indiscriminate rebuke, or any suspicion that their faith was not fruitful. He writes to them, therefore, as we should write to a child of generous temper, whom we loved ; over whom we had long watched, and who was now removed from under our eyes, and about whose steadiness we might have some misgivings, though our hopes were stronger than our fears. We should say, "I know, my child, what affection you have for me, and what marks you have shown of goodness and a love for what is pleasing to God. And you know how ten-

derly I am concerned for your happiness. You will therefore forgive me for warning you. Not that I fear your disappointing my expectations, for I am certain that, though removed from me, you will be all that I wish and hope. I will not, and do not believe that you will fall back, but rather grow in all that is excellent and worthy a true Christian, and of good repute in the sight of God and man." Such a mode of speaking would be much better fitted to keep a generous heart straight, than any harsh enumeration of duties.

And it is exactly in this spirit that the apostle writes to his beloved disciples, over whose progress in the course which they had begun, he was watching so tenderly. As though he had said, "I love you a great deal too much for me to suppose for an instant that you have permitted the work of God within you to stand still and remain imperfect. I cannot bear to think so poorly of you and of your love to Christ. And unless I am forced

to confess the contrary, I will be *quite confident*, brethren, that you are adding grace to grace, till you reach, in God's due time, the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ! "It is meet for me," he says, "to think thus of you all, because I have you in my heart." And exactly in the same manner it is that the minister of Christ, such as God hath made me to you, loves to think of those whom he has done his best to train up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He will feel confident, except where he is compelled to see the contrary, that those over whom he watches are ever making progress in the divine life. That the grace of God to them has not been in vain; that they accept his holy counsels and faithful unfolding of the gospel, with the same love, and simplicity, and sincerity with which they are offered. And that, by the power of the Lord, they all, like the disciples of Paul, will be made perfect with himself unto the day of redemption.

But to proceed. After thus dwelling upon his love for them he goes on to explain more fully what he means. "I pray that your love may abound yet *more and more*;" that is, "even your affection for Christ, which has shown itself already in leaving dead works to serve the living God, must become, before you are fit for glory, much more fervent than it is. And the more you know of Him the stronger it will grow! The more completely you commit your souls to Him as a faithful Saviour, and, by doing his will in all things, prove the reality of your trust, the more you will comprehend of the length and depth, and breadth and height, of the riches of God in him. Do his will; and you will then see his glory, *not without*."

And nothing short of *this love* can give you this *practical* acquaintance with Him,—his grace, his power, and that peace that passeth all understanding which proceedeth from Him. Because, unless you *love* Him, his commandments will seem too grievous

to be borne, and you will never find it in your heart, with all the offers of the Spirit to assist you, to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye for his sake. And at the same time, what you once fancied love for Christ will die away, and become a hollow profession, or an idle, groundless fancy, unless it is thus practised and strengthened by obedience! Just like the affection of a child for a parent which turns into a base, selfish, and false thing, unless, by outward acts and real sacrifices, it is trained up and transformed from a feeling into a principle. It is not the love that talks, or the love that feels, but the love that *acts*, which is of any value in the eyes either of God or man.

Then, with knowledge proceeding from love will come *judgment*; the power more and more of discerning what is right and what is wrong; what is in harmony with the mind of Christ and what is not. That *spiritual* perception will grow of which the carnal mind hath nothing; and which,

brightening more and more into the perfect day of the soul, can only be attained by striving, in all things, within us and without us, to perform the will of God, and comprehend *all* the truth as it is in Jesus. "That your love may abound more and more in *knowledge and in all judgment.*"

And this is not all. There are many, many points in the christian life, and the training of the soul; many, many truths touching the means of grace and the higher duties of a Christian to himself, to his family, to the society in which he lives, and the ways of promoting God's glory, which are not usually seen all at once by an awakening mind. They who are advanced in the heavenly path discern them clearly. They have no more doubt about them than about the sun's shining in the midst of heaven. But it is not so with those who have not advanced like themselves; but who are, like trees suddenly blighted when young, become stunted and fruitless,

though they looked well in men's eyes at first. Such are the blessedness of God's holy day, the delights of his house and the congregation of his saints. Such is the *joy* of making sacrifices to Christ, and saying to ourselves, not "How little can I contrive to do; or how little can I manage to give;" but, "How glad I am to have this opportunity of showing how little I value earthly things, in comparison of Christ! *How much* can I bestow, whether it be of time, or trouble, or money or whatsoever it be. Let me not stint God! but let my love bewide and over-flowing like Christ's."

"That *ye may approve things that are excellent,*" saith the apostle; all things which are better than others. Not one or two, he says, but *all* which may in any way tend to God's glory, and to the good of souls! And then observe the next word of Saint Paul's exhortation, "*that ye may be sincere.*" He means to say; It will not do for you to shrink back from all that I have now been laying before you,

as necessary parts of a Christian's duty, and absolutely indispensable for the ripening of the soul into glory ! It will never do for you, to try to compound matters with God and with Christ, and to put off him who trieth the reins, and from whom no secrets are hid, with *a lame and halting* righteousness ; in which not half of the graces of the Lord, which are our pattern, are at all discernible ; thus marring the purity of the faith, by evil admixture ! He requires the entire heart and soul, and you have promised to give it ! If you are *sincere*, and not a hypocrite, you really must do it as well as say it. He demands that you be a faithful soldier and servant, enduring hardship, labouring with the sweat of your brow, nay, pouring out the very life itself, if need be, for the sake of Him who hath bought you with his blood.

You have promised this. If you would be sincere and not a hypocrite, *fulfil your engagement*. He has told you, over and

over again, that the only love on which He puts the least value, the only love which He *will reward*, is not that which cries, "Lord, Lord," but that which does his commandments. Such a love you have promised! God cannot change one jot or tittle of what He has ever said, and therefore, it is sheer madness to imagine that He will let you escape for less. If, therefore, you are sincere and not a hypocrite, render to Him while you have yet time, and his grace is ready to assist you, such a love as you have vowed.

"That ye may be sincere, and without offence, till the day of Christ;" mixing nothing impure, or insincere, with your faith and love; having nothing remaining in your soul which can be blamed or censured.

You see now, dear brethren, the meaning of the apostle, and can now enter into what is contained in what follows, which are the words of my text, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which

are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." It is quite impossible for anything to be more emphatic, or better expressed, to avoid all misunderstanding, in minds which, with all godly simplicity, are desirous of knowing the truth. He is speaking, you remember, not to one or two chosen and eminent saints at Philippi, but to the whole church there. And it would be mere mockery, and an insincerity which it would be the height of wickedness to imagine in an apostle purified by the Spirit of Christ,—to suppose that he directs ALL to practise *that*, and labour for *that*, which, if the truth were told, it is only in the power of one or two out of the number, do what they will, to attain. No, no, brethren, depend upon it, that the Holy Spirit does not speak, like foolish men, idly and at random, but neither more nor less than he means.

And, albeit it is true, that there is a variety in God's graces, and that some of his saints bring forth thirty, some sixty, and

some a hundred fold, each according to the measure given them, yet *there is a* certain stature, and a certain likeness to the Saviour, and a certain fruitfulness, which, even the lowest and least formed among the servants of Christ must attain, if he would finally be saved. It is not holy thoughts here and there; it is not what he may please to call a good act every now and then, that comes up to Christ's demands or the apostle's word, like fruits scattered here and there over a tree in autumn. No; he says that we must labour to *be filled*. Evidently, that *all* the soul may *be occupied*, and, not this or that portion of it. That *the whole*,—*all that is within it*, as holy David says, all its faculties, and all its affections,—may be taken complete possession of by divine love. That we may be changed throughout, till Satan, or the world, or self, has no share in it, but Christ hath it all.

Again; it is not merely *filled* with *righteousness*; for then, we might escape, pos-

sibly, by making up a *hollow* righteousness, a *barren, meagre, starveling* faith, unfruitful as the East wind! We might imagine that a soul filled with these dangerous fumes was a righteous soul, and clothed with Christ! On the contrary, he takes care to say, filled with *the FRUITS of righteousness*; like a garner or barn, in which the harvest is laid up, *solid fruits*, rich and fit to sustain life. Such is the soul of Christ's true disciples, not made up of words and professions, but holy deeds, and holy affections, things which will bear trying; a solid fruitful love, and living faith, such as shall stand blameless, before the throne, in the day of *the Lord*.

Nor let any one think that, in saying that they who are filled with *the fruits* of holy living,—*deeds* that is, *things actually done*,—shall alone stand in the judgment, that I am not speaking the language of the holy book. If any one is wrong in laying stress on a real holy life, and *deeds* of righteousness, it is not we, but that

book which cannot lie. David is wrong, who says, "Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord, the heavenly Zion? even He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart," &c. St. Paul is wrong when he tells us that we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be judged for the *deeds* done in the body. St. John is wrong, when he says, "Hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." The blessed Lord himself is wrong, when He says, "If any man love me, he *will do my commandments*." And He must be wrong when, at the great and terrible day, on which He comes to pass sentence on the quick and dead, He makes all the trial to hang, not on names, or professions, or faith, but on *works, works only*; and then concludes the whole awful narrative by saying, "*and those that have done good*, shall go into life

everlasting; and those that have *done evil*, into everlasting fire."

No, no, brethren; this is a certain and eternal truth, that, *without holiness*, no man shall see the Lord; and that holiness must be proved by its blessed fruits, while our time of trial lasts. For afterwards, cometh the night, when no man can work.

But I know what the thought of some among you is,—“This,” they say, “is opposed to justification by faith only.” If it was, indeed, it would not be the Gospel. But they know very little of the nature of a true and living faith, of the word of God, or the Gospel of Christ, and the power of the Spirit, who think or speak thus. Suppose that a man pointed to a tree covered all over with fruit, and pronounced it good, and praised it for its noble look and copious produce; or suppose that he pointed to a field, waving all over with golden corn, ripe, with its heavy fruitful

ears, for the husbandman's sickle, and pronounced it, for the sake of its mighty harvest, a *good* field, would he not be speaking the simple truth? Would you not think it childish folly to say that in pronouncing it good on account of its harvest, he did dishonour to the strength, and secret virtue of the soil which bore it? Why, you would say it is absurd to talk of goodness in a field, or goodness in a tree, *apart from what it bears*. You cannot separate the one from the other. The harvest and the fruit are the proofs, the only proof of goodness in the tree, or goodness in the soil, and without that inner virtue they *never* would have been there.

So it is in regard to the soul of the Christian. It is the holy life, the heavenly affections, the godly walk shining with constant evidences of the divine principle within, which *shows the faith*, as the harvest shows the richness of the soil, and the fruit the goodness of the tree. And therefore, Christ asks at the judgment-

day, not, What have you believed? but, What have you done? When, therefore, holy Scripture speaks of a christian life, and obedience to God's commandments for the sake of the love that is to-usward in Christ Jesus, it always implies, as a matter of course, a *living faith* at the bottom of it, because it can come from nothing else. And when it talks of faith, it always takes it for granted that it is not dead, but living; making the soul move and act, as the soul itself gives animation, and strength, and the infinite varieties of movement to the body wherein it dwells. You cannot separate them, without destroying both.

And so, if you examine the text, the very words themselves express, "the fruits of *righteousness*." But our *righteousness*, and our sanctification, and our redemption, is, in truth, none other than *Christ* himself, brought home to our souls by faith. And our holy affections, and holy deeds are therefore the *fruits of Christ*,—

of Christ within us, of Christ become our life, of Christ *in* our heart, and pouring out holy energies from himself. Just as the healthful blood is sent bounding through the veins by the *heart* which God hath put within us, as the centre and fountain of our earthly life.

Finally. So far are we from dishonouring justification by *faith only*, by insisting on holiness and growth in grace, as indispensable to salvation, that *this* alone exalts it, and makes it what it is, a heavenly thing and a transforming power. They dishonour it, who prate about faith in Christ and its saving efficacy, while the tempers are unsanctified and the life unholy, and such commandments of Christ as do not suit their taste are habitually disobeyed! No, no; it is more powerful than *they* think or dream. It is like fire, and searches the heart, and brings down Christ to change and transform us, and *does* give us strength to conquer sin, and the world and the devil, through Him on whom it lays

hold. THEY dishonour it, who enable men of the world to point to them and say, "Look at that man, who accounts himself better than his neighbours, and talks about *faith*. Why his life and temper, except as far as words go, are no *better* than ours. With all his pretences, he is as worldly as those who make no such professions, carnal, unloving, given to wrath, and all sorts of selfishness. What is the good of his faith to him? If this is the Gospel, we can do just as well without it! Show us that it is worth something, and really makes a man better, and we may embrace it, but not before."

But I am talking about men dishonouring *faith*. But they do more, they dishonour the eternal Son of God, they dishonour *Christ*! They make the holy One the author of sin! They make Him who is no respecter of persons, a favourer of them who are presumptuous enough to fancy themselves, chosen by Him, with no seal of the election on them. Nay,

their open vices speak as loud as a trumpet sounds, that they are Satan's servants, and not his who came to destroy *sin*, and to conquer corruption, and to make his elect die unto iniquity, and live again unto righteousness. They dishonour Christ and make Him a liar, because they would fain believe, and make others believe, that He is not in earnest when He talks of judging men by their *works*; of blessing those and only those who are pure in heart, and peace-makers, and mourners for sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and patient, and long-suffering, and doing the will of God in all things, as He did it himself. They make Him a liar, therefore, when, by his own lips, and the lips of the apostles, He tells us that no man shall enter heaven who is not born anew, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. They, themselves, not being *new* creatures at all, except in a few professions, but acting and talking and thinking, exactly like the world, which makes no pretence to

anything above the *natural* man, and is therefore so much better than they, because it is not hypocritical !

They do dishonour to the Holy Ghost, —that *precious* gift which Christ hath promised to all them that love Him, and who hath power to form us after the divine image,—by living on and on, with idols unsundered, and tempers unsanctified, and works undone, and then talking of human weakness and infirmity *as an excuse* for it all ! As if God did not know that we were weak when He sent Christ on earth, and called us to holiness through Him ! As if the Holy Spirit had not the power, which God says He has, of *strengthening our weakness*, and quickening our faith, and enabling us to live as lights in the world, like the apostles and saints from the beginning. As though God were not in earnest when He promises the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, and strive to obtain Him. And as though, when He tells us to pray, to watch, to

make our calling and election sure, to abound in spiritual gifts, to fight the good fight, like those who contend for life, He was talking idle words. As though He meant we should be perfectly easy about the matter, leaving it to the Holy Spirit to change and renew us, as He pleased; but not moving a finger, or giving up a lust, or sacrificing anything we like to keep, to maintain the grace He has given us already, and to obtain more of this inestimable benefit.

They do dishonour to the eternal Father, who hath sent his Son, not only to save us from punishment, but from *sin*. Nay, He hath planned our redemption, and slain the Lamb even from the foundation of the world, that He might purchase through Him a holy nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works, made anew in his own image, and ministering to his honour and praise! being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

O eternal Father, who hast not only slain the Lamb from the foundation of the world, that, being found in Him, we might escape the vengeance which thou hast laid up for the ungodly ; but, as the signs and fruits of our adoption, hast prepared good works for us to do, and holy affections for us to wear, and a path of godliness for us to walk in ; quicken us, we beseech thee, by thy Spirit in the inner man ! . Implant a living faith within us, powerful, through Christ, to conquer sin, and to bear forth, abundantly, the fruits of righteousness ! That, at the last day, we may be able, with all saints from the beginning, to stand, without condemnation, in thy sight, through the same, thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. . Amen.

SERMON V.

MATT. xii. 20.—"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."

IN the first part of the text we view our blessed Lord and Saviour in that exceeding tenderness of character, and compassion for the poor and needy, in which He delights to represent himself to us, though He is all the while the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. The feeble, bending reed He forbeareth to break; but makes it lift up its head. The smallest spark of holy fire he will not quench, but fan and nourish into a flame.

But I know not how it happens, brethren, whether it be from that malignity of our nature which refuses to be affected by mere acts of love and long-suffering, or from some other cause ; yet so it is, that a *merely* loving Saviour, made up of nothing else but holiness and humility, would produce small effect upon us. Just as in common life, mere gentleness and mere goodness of nature, without some strength of mind and resolution to support it, is very apt to produce contempt. Now all this might happen in the case of our Saviour. But it is marvellously prevented in our blessed Lord by his being both God and man. Hence comes a majesty in the lowliness, and a power and force, but just veiled, even in the sufferings of the Lord, which makes all things in him, not lovely only, but awful ; a goodness at which we tremble !

For instance—you would not wonder at a perfect obedience to Almighty God on the part of a mere creature. You would

not think much of it as a matter of merit. But when you add, in this case, that it is the eternal Son of the eternal Father who was thus obedient unto the death of the cross, then it looks and is a wonderful act.

Again,—if a person without strength of his own to protect himself, or the help of others more powerful than he, submits to violence, there is no great wonder. He is only doing what he cannot help. But if he were able to destroy his enemies as our Lord was, nay, could call to his assistance, in a moment, tens of thousands of great and glorious angels, and yet makes no resistance to the violence of wicked men, it then *becomes an awful and strange* thing to think of.

Again,—if one who has many offences to answer for, and is really deserving of punishment, submits to the chastisement due to malefactors, there is nothing to surprise us! But if a perfectly pure and holy being does so, like the spotless Lamb

of God ; if He chooses to be condemned, instead of making his innocence apparent as the light, to all the world ; if, though He is judge of all men, both of small and great and quick and dead, He yet permits himself to be witnessed against, and judged, and condemned,—here, again, is a marvellous thing.

Finally:—if we saw a man like ourselves employed in ministering to the wants of a brother man in distress, binding up his wounds, watching by his bedside, and doing everything for his comfort and relief which the most tender charity could suggest, it would, beyond a doubt, create in our hearts both an approbation and a love for what is so kind and good ! But, if we were told that it was some great king who was doing all these humble offices, *condescending*, as men in their folly usually think and call it, thus low, why, we should not only be *astonished*, but we should be filled with tenfold the love for him which we felt before we knew what and who he was.

And so it is in regard to our blessed Lord, when we think that this, the meekest and gentlest of the sons of men, as He looked to our eyes, was God himself in disguise. The servant of servants was King of kings and Lord of lords!

Now what I want to impress upon you by this, is—that our Lord's character, though it is but one, has, in that unity, two faces to it. That the one is awful and full of majesty and power, though the other is all gentleness and condescension. And that all this awfulness and this power, before which heaven and earth must bow and obey, exist just the same, though we do not see them in present action! As a king would be just as much a king though he stooped to bind up the wounds of a beggar, and was disguised in the dress of a peasant. I will grant this much however, if you wish it, that just at the present moment you have no reason at all to *dread the authority* of Christ Jesus. Though his wrath, if he permitted it to

flame out, would burn like fire, and consume all the wicked in a moment, yet you may be quite certain that it will not harm or hurt you to-day or to-morrow. Nay, the world may do exactly as we see it doing around us—despise the Saviour, and account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing! It may if it please run all risks rather than take up the cross, and follow, in truth and reality, Him who is meek and lowly in heart, and yet no harm will befall it. Nay, men may live utterly without God and Christ in the world, and be none the worse for it, though they blaspheme Him who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.

But then this is only half the case. For the question comes, will it ALWAYS be so? Are we to imagine that He who has the strength of the lion, and is able to consume his enemies after he has broken them in pieces, will always choose to be as gentle as the lamb? Will He never

turn round upon us? Will He NEVER throw off the mean attire in which He chooses to clothe himself, and make us and all the world see that He is God? This is the question. It is one which the psalmist seems sometimes to have asked himself, when he saw the wicked in such prosperity, and God hearing and sitting by, and taking no notice of what was going on. "How long," he says, "shall the enemy do this dishonour? how long shall he blaspheme thy name, for ever?" "Up, Lord," he says, "up, Lord; disappoint him and cast him down." "Pluck thy right hand out of thy bosom, and consume the enemy." So that almighty God appeared *over-gentle* and forbearing in the eyes of the psalmist, even before He had worn before our eyes that surpassing gentleness, and quietness, and long-suffering which marks everything in the words and conduct of the Son of God, as given us in the Gospel. "He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall his voice be heard

in the streets ; a bruised reed shall he not break, and a smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."

Till then, you see—*till then*—so that a limit most clearly is put to it. For when this certain time shall come, all will be changed, and the Saviour of men will turn, on a sudden, into everything that is most awful and terrible. "Till he shall send forth judgment unto victory." I will take the text word for word !

Now what is here meant by *judgment* ? It is *that* in which the wisdom of almighty God has been shown more than in anything else in the whole world besides, *that* in which he has thrown all the fulness of his almighty mind, *contriving*, in ways which no created being could ever have devised or imagined, to reconcile mercy and justice, truth and righteousness, and to spare the sinner, while he showed his exceeding hatred for the sin. You see, therefore, what it means — the glorious

Gospel—that is *the judgment and determination* of which the prophet speaks. It is salvation to men through the blood of Jesus, and a new creation of men's souls into an image of righteousness and true holiness, through that blessed Spirit which the blood of the Redeemer has purchased. Again:—to *judge*, is to *show the difference* between two things, or persons, and so decide the matter between them. And in an eminent manner and degree has almighty God done this in the glorious Gospel. Who could ever have imagined, for instance, before he had the word of God to tell it him, half the love and tender care which our heavenly Father exerts towards all the works of his hands? How dear we are to Him, and how much He is willing and prepared to do for us, if we will but permit Him to follow out his gracious designs towards us? And yet observe what I just said about judgment. What a *difference* has the Gospel put between that love for us, and that weak

indulgence and kindness towards sin, on which men reckon so confidently, and sin accordingly without fear ! For in spite of this love, we see that He will, beyond all question, terribly punish those that reject his offers of mercy. *Here is judgment.*

And so it is on the other side of the question. Almighty God, for instance, is inexpressibly *pure and holy*. He is more pure and holy than the heart or thoughts of men, do what they will, can possibly conceive. He is so just, that all the powers in heaven and in earth could not induce Him to spare the guilty ! Yet what *a difference* is there, as the Gospel puts it, between this holiness and this terrible justice *in itself*, and the same justice softened by mercy and compassion ! They do not, in God, indeed, destroy his justice, or quench its righteous flames without a cause ; but they induce Him to make us the most loving offers of forgiveness, if we will accept them, and to try with us all manner

of gentleness, before He will permit his full anger to arise, or all the punishment of sin to fall upon us. *Here is judgment.*

Again. Men in general think very little of *sin*. They hardly know what it is, and have scarcely any notion that anything deserves the name except those *open-day* offences, and notorious transgressions, about which nobody can doubt, who has within him the commonest notions of decency and morality. But look at the word of God, and see how great a difference that which you read therein makes in this question. You find that sin lies in the *thoughts* of the heart, and dispositions of the soul, which the eye of God, from which no secrets are hid, can alone discern. That the essence of it, that which makes it to be sin, is *dislike* of God's commandments, a hatred of a holiness inward and spiritual, a determined and self-willed turning away from anything like a giving up of the heart to Him who saved and redeemed us. And so again, in regard to *goodness*. What a

line does it draw between God's goodness and what men like to call by that name — *these false outward virtues* which they find it convenient to practise, congratulating themselves all the while, how excellent they are, and how righteous, and how deserving of reward ! Whilst true goodness is that holiness of thought, and word, and deed, which flows from an earnest and living faith in Christ Jesus, which rests its hope of salvation entirely upon his atoning and heavenly righteousness, and brings forth, as its outward proof and evidence, the fruits of the Spirit, to the praise and glory of God. Here again is *judgment*.

And finally, consider that *separation* which it is the resolution and unchangeable will of God to make, when the end of all things shall at last be come, between those who love and serve Him, and those who serve Him not. Between the two there shall be for ever a great gulf fixed, an unbridged chasm, so that there shall be no passing over from the habitations of the

wicked to the habitations of the just. While the one shall be condemned without hope and without cessation to dreadful torments both of body and soul, along with the evil angels for whom hell was built; the others shall enjoy for ever the blessed light of God's countenance, the presence of their glorified Saviour, and the pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. Here is *judgment*.

And not only is this revelation of God to be called judgment, but already has Christ *sent it forth*. For He is Himself the *Word* of God, by whom the will of his Father is declared to his creatures. He is the inspirer of the prophets and of the apostles, who all spake as He gave them power and utterance. By their mouth He has declared these wondrous counsels of justice and goodness, ever since the world began. But *specially* did He send it forth in his own person, when He was born on earth, in the form of sinful man. With lips which spake so as never men's lips spake before,

He declared the glad tidings of salvation with the judgment to come, to those among whom he was sent, the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And when He had completed his mission, and had shed forth upon the cross that precious blood by which our souls are cleansed, just before He ascended up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God, He commissioned his apostles to proclaim the same tidings to all the world, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." He has *sent forth* judgment, therefore. But has He sent it forth unto victory?

He has done so up to a certain point. For instance, there was not a kingdom in the world where the Gospel was not carried, and where, along with it, life and immortality were not brought to light! And though to human eyes, the undertaking seemed hopeless, that twelve fishermen should prevail over the great and learned of the earth, yet so it was. *They did succeed* by Christ's grace accompanying them, and

brought countless multitudes to the feet of Jesus. Now *here* was a sending forth of judgment unto victory. And so in every individual case in which the heart was opened ! When the humbled sinner was brought by the preaching of the Word, to throw himself, body and soul, upon the mercy of God, and when he thus overcame all the opposition from enemies without, and the corruption of the soul within, *a victory for Christ* may well be said to have been gained. The great enemy of our souls, whose kingdom Christ came to destroy was thus vanquished and trampled under foot ! The spirits of men whom he had bound in misery and iron, were delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And many, many of us, I hope and trust, dear brethren, can testify from our own experience, the commencement at least, and constant growth of this spiritual victory of Christ over our sins and innumerable corruptions. But though this was victory for the Gospel, yet it is

not that *perfect* victory to which judgment shall at last be sent forth. The time has not yet come when He shall cease to spare the bruised reed.

Again, only look at the nations of the world, and see how many are Christ's even in profession. Of course, from living in a christian country we may not be aware of the true state of things; we may *dream and fancy* that the rest of the world is like what we see around us. But a very small portion of the whole world, comparatively speaking, knows so much as the name of Christ Jesus. Much less have they received his power and Spirit into their hearts. So that his victory at present is not as wide as the *world*. Nay, look in this christian land, which, bad as in many respects it is, is yet the most favoured region on which the sun shines, and has more of the love of God in it than any other. And do you think, *can you*, with the utmost stretch and indulgence of charity, suppose that the greater number of our fellow Christians

are devoted servants of the Lord who bought them? Are their hearts and souls really given to his service? With all their infirmities and short-comings, do they really love Him above everything else under the sun, and do they long, above all things, to love Him more, and serve Him better? I am not afraid that you will disagree with me, or think that I am rash and uncharitable, if I say, that certainly the majority of men among us, are not thus occupied about the one thing needful, are not thus devoted servants of their Lord, or ready to meet Him, whenever He may appear in his glory. So that even in a *christian* land the victory of the Saviour is very far short of completion.

But let us come still nearer home. Let us look to ourselves. Let those, of whom I believe there are many here, who are really bent on saving their souls; let those who are penetrated with a love of Him who loved them first, and showed his love by dying for them, and who do long and

strive to get forward in their christian course; let them, even *them*, closely and faithfully examine themselves! How much coldness will they find in their hearts! What a lack of faith, and indisposition to trust everything to their Lord, as He has commanded them! How many iniquities in their holiest things! How much to reproach themselves with, in their lack of gratitude and lack of exertion, and self-sacrifice towards their Father and their Redeemer! So that even in his saints the victory of Christ is as yet incomplete.

To what extent, then, will it ever be completed? Why, dear brethren, there are many things in Scripture which would lead us to expect that a time will come, before the end of the world, when the faith of Christ Jesus, and the blessed fruits of it, will be more spread among the nations of the earth, than ever has been the case before. All nations shall really and truly acknowledge his kingdom over them, and serve Him in spirit and in truth.

But whether this be the case or no, I am sure we ought all to pray to God that so it may be! And it is quite certain that the time will arrive when all those who have not come to Jesus in love shall stand before Him in fear. Those whom God's grace has not melted to accept the Gospel, and whose eyes have not been so far opened as to discern its beauty and heavenliness, while it was of any use to them, shall be compelled to acknowledge that *it* is the glorious revelation of almighty God, when such acknowledgment shall be too late to save them from his awful judgments for having rejected it in the days of their flesh. Every knee shall bow to Him that sits upon the throne. And while He displays his great majesty and terrible triumph in the eyes of all creatures, they shall call in vain on the rocks to fall on them, and the hills to cover them from the wrath of the Lamb. *This, then, will be sending forth judgment unto victory.*

Again,—the souls of all who have fallen asleep in Jesus, with that assurance of faith which springs from the blessed fruits of the Spirit, shall wake up in Christ's likeness; nay, not only in the likeness of his glorified body, all light and splendour, but in the likeness of his Spirit. They shall be as pure and spotless as the angels themselves. Not so much as the smallest stain of sin or corruption shall remain behind. It will all be washed away, and not only shall all tears be wiped from their eyes, and all sorrow be banished from their hearts, but all possibility of sinning shall be taken away from their souls.. They shall be full of Christ, and of God. Here again will be a sending forth of judgment unto victory!

But not only so; for *with sin* shall be conquered he who hath the power of it: The great tempter of man, he who is a liar and murderer of souls from the beginning, and hath so miserably marred God's fair creation, shall, with all his evil angels,

powerful and countless as they are, be cast in the lake of fire, and the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever. *This again will be a victory—complete and for ever.* For along with this binding of Satan with eternal chains under darkness, DEATH himself, *the last enemy*, will be cast into the same lake. He will dwell with the souls of the wicked, but he will no longer have power over the sons of God. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” You see now, dear brethren, that the great day of our Lord’s victory is the day of judgment. And that when that is come, there will be no more pleading for sin, no more long-suffering, no more love, no more compassion; no more a Saviour; but only an awful Judge, an avenging God, and a consuming fire. Now, therefore, is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation!

Grant, O Lord Jesus, such a measure

of thy grace to our hearts, that being bruised and wounded with a sense of sin, they may be bound up and healed by thee; that the faint spark of grace in our souls may be cherished and fed into a holy flame, that so we may meet thee with joy when thou shalt descend in thy great power and reign, and not be trampled, with thine enemies, under thy feet, when thy great and terrible day shall come! Amen.

SERMON VI.

1 PET. iv. 7.—“The end of all things is at hand :
be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

WHAT could the apostle have intended when he spoke and wrote in this awful and startling fashion!—the *end of all things is at hand*. One imagines, straightway, that the termination of men's works, and men's lives, of the heaven and the earth, must be really coming fast upon us! We stop and lay aside our work for an instant, as men do, when they are interrupted in their business, by some alarming intelligence; and we look up in expectation to hear the trumpet sounding, and to see the

Judge descending, and to feel the solid earth melting from beneath us! And yet eighteen hundred years have gone by, and the end is not yet come! though the text saith it is at hand. *How is this?*

Why, brethren, it may be replied, in the first place, that almighty God, who dwelleth in that eternity which He himself constituteth, and seeth the end from the beginning, doth not look upon time and the things that are measured by it, in the same manner as beings like you and me, who are short-sighted, and unable to grasp immensity, either of time or space. With Him a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Everything that is to come is to Him as *certain* as if it had occurred already! And, comparing the course of earthly things with that infinite eternity which lies spread all round about them, the great God may well overlook at a glance the two or three thousand years which lie between his counsel

and the execution of it. He may say with truth, "*The end of all things is at hand.*"

And, indeed, in some such spirit it is that the sacred writers constantly speak of the condition of the world, since God's last revelation of love in Christ Jesus has been made, as being the termination and winding up of his dealings with men. They speak of the *whole interval*, so long to our measurement, between Christ's coming in the flesh to save, and his *second* coming to judge the world; as the *last days*—the *latter days*; and of themselves as those "upon whom the ends of the world are come." As though *now* all things, in their eyes, were waxing old and very infirm, and the new heavens and new earth were ready to take the place of the old ones. Here is *one* explanation.

Again,—St. Peter was writing to Jews. And, *in another sense*, to all of the stock of Abraham, who clung to God's dispensation to his first chosen people, *the end of things was*, humanly speaking, *very near*.

at hand. I mean, of course, that coming of our Lord, as he himself foretold, in power and a terrible glory, to take vengeance upon his people who had despised and rejected Him. It was *indeed to the Jews the world's dying day.* It was a rejection from the presence of the Lord; the destruction of their glorious temple; the ploughing up of their holy city by the hands of the heathen, till not one stone of either was left upon another; and their own dispersion, in sorrow and shame, under all the ends of heaven! Well might all this *seem to them* like the dissolution of the world and the passing away of all things! For to a Jew this awful judgment and breaking up of the law seemed just as likely to happen as the falling of the stars from heaven, a thing well nigh impossible, or worthy to mark the termination of the universe itself! And so awful was it, even *in God's* view, that, in the discourses of our Lord and Saviour, the end of the Jewish dispensation, and the end of the

world, are described under the very same form, and in the same words. In this way too, therefore, it might be true that the end of all things was at hand !

However, as far as we have yet gone, there is nothing, it must be confessed, which comes home very closely to men's hearts and consciences *now-a-days*. Though the destruction of Jerusalem be as terrible as Scripture describes it to be, yet, it is past and gone. It does not concern us therefore ! And as to the destruction of all things, of the world, and its elements, as it has been deferred so long, it may be deferred for many hundred years to come ! And the rocks, and the mountains, and the strong foundations of the earth may last a long while yet ; and there is nothing, therefore, a man may say, particularly alarming to me, in regard to "*the end of all things*." Perhaps not, though a man would still be a fool to prefer sin to holiness, even if he were sure of living as long as the world lasted.

But the plain truth is, that *to us* it matters very little whether the world lasts only a few years more, or thousands of years to come. Seeing that *we* are made of flesh and blood, no better or stronger than the grass of the field, and not of stone or iron like the mountains which, if God permits, may endure in their might for ever. We must die, dear brethren,—we must die, whether we will or no. And this *to us* will be the end of all things. The moment that the soul departs from the body, it renders up an account of the deeds done in the flesh, whether they be good or whether they be evil, and its everlasting lot is irrevocably determined. There is no change or repentance in the grave—as the tree falls, so must it lie—it is the end—it is finished. It will little concern us, when we lie in the grave, to know that the sun, and moon, and stars are still shining on other inhabitants of the world as gladly and gloriously as ever they did on us! What avails it? *to us*

they have ceased to be. Life, the time of trial, the world and all that it contains are over *to us*; quite as much so, when we have reached the world of departed spirits, as if they were instantly consumed in the fire the moment we left them! No one, therefore, will doubt that to you and me death is “the end of all things.” And no wise man will hesitate to admit the perfect truth of the words that follow, that “*it is at hand.*”

Nay, we, with the enlarged view which the Spirit gives us who are God’s children, should call it at hand, even if it were fifty or sixty years off. For it is utterly unworthy of any thoughtful Christian, indeed, *impossible* for him, conversing as he constantly does with eternity, to consider even the *longest* life as more than a span long, in comparison with the world to come, and its overwhelming infinity. But seeing that to most of us life *must* be over much sooner than this, and that any one of us *may* be summoned to meet the

Judge in an instant, there is additional reason why I should take it for granted that it is, as the apostle says, *at hand*. It must have happened to most of us, who have lived any time in the world, to see those alive, nay, rioting in the fulness of life one day, who have been corpses the next. We have seen men young, full of strength and vigour, who have never had an hour's illness before, yet smitten down in a moment. I mention this, not to give you pain, but because what happens in our own parish or neighbourhood is nearly the same as in our own family. And it is thus that God *thrusts upon men*—violently and fiercely I was going to say, but, at any rate, thrusts upon them,—in a way not to be mistaken, a knowledge of his dealings, and the uncertainty of life, which will heap mountains of condemnation, in the day of judgment, upon the heads of those who reject the warning. What saith the Church, in that solemn service, in which she commits her children to the dust, as much

of them, that is, as can die ! “ Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower ; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death ; of whom may we seek for succour but of thee, O Lord, who, for our sins, art justly displeased ? Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.”

And this point being settled brings us to the *duties* which St. Peter builds, for our instruction, upon this awful truth, that the end of all things is at hand ; and which, by God’s grace, I now proceed to commend to your conscience and my own. “ Therefore,” he says, “ *be sober !*” this is the first thing, *sobriety* ; but how ? One part of that sobriety which is indispensable to the christian life, and without which it is absolutely impossible, that any

soul of man should see the Lord, is easily disposed of, and no one can seriously dispute the truth and necessity of it. No drunkard, for instance; no gluttonous person, or winebibber shall ever enter into the kingdom of heaven. But this is not all. For even short of that excess which brings down the intemperate, body and soul, to the level of the beasts that perish, there is an habitual quiet indulgence in meats and drinks which has a direct tendency to turn the whole soul more and more into a carnal nature. Well does the apostle warn us, of it; for though it may stop short of the extreme point, it yet throws insuperable obstacles in the way of that self-denial without which the heart cannot be elevated, and the thoughts cannot be purified! Nay, without it the whole nature of the man, as far as God and spiritual objects are concerned, becomes utterly low. It goes, like the serpent, upon its belly, and eats the dust. In fact, the spirit is smothered under earthly indul-

gences. It cannot rise; the divine flame which should mount to heaven is quenched at its birth; there is no fuel for it, nothing to fan or feed it withal. This is so evident from the manifold declarations of Scripture, and so approves itself to every one who has either studied his own experience, or the example of other men, that we need spend to-day but small time and few remarks upon it.

I would only ask of careless Christians, if perchance any such sit among you, what would you think of a man, who, being perfectly aware that some great and overwhelming calamity were hanging every moment over his head, or that he might be summoned to some powerful tribunal, on whose decision his life or death depended, should drown his thoughts in eating or drinking, or other excess, instead of calmly and solemnly preparing himself, like a man, for the trial he was about to undergo! We know, indeed, such is men's sin and folly, that many and many

would so act. It is a very common case, this disposition to drown care, and some of us perhaps may sympathize with it. Yet still, it may be confidently asked of any Christian, what, in your better moments, would you judge of it? Plainly, say what you will in defence of it, it marks a miserable and degraded mind, lost to all sense of self-respect, and truth, and reason! If we pity it, there is a righteous contempt mixed with our compassion!

But this is exactly the case, though, in degree, infinitely more awful, with all who drown the nobler and more thoughtful faculties of their souls in meats and drinks, and lead a life of coarse, thoughtless enjoyment. For death is every minute close at hand, and judgment hanging over their heads only by a single hair, and ready to fall upon them. Is this a condition to meet God? is this a habit of mind in which you would wish to encounter the Judge upon the throne? Would a man on earth like to stumble in this idle, wild,

and random fashion, into the presence of an earthly judge, or earthly sovereign, one invested with claims upon his respect or on his fears ? I trow not, brethren !

It is said, and I believe with truth, that if some terrible piece of news be communicated suddenly to a man who is drunk, it usually sobers him in an instant. The fumes of the wine, the whirling of the brain, the confusion of the thoughts, the wild play of the blood, stops in a moment. It is like cold water to the body, under similar circumstances ; the sudden stroke brings him to his senses.

Well, but then, if this appear but natural, may we not ask, what intelligence can compare in terror and solemnity to the message of the Gospel to the careless sinner ? That our souls are lost for ever, unless, being made anew, by adoption and grace, they are saved in Christ Jesus ! That the world to come, with all its infinity of joys and sorrows, is close upon us ! Aye, that any hour of the day, for aught we know to the con-

trary, these garments of the flesh may be violently stripped from off us, and our naked spirits stand before the throne of Him who is a consuming fire, and an exceeding jealous God? Ought not this to make a man sober?

It may have happened to some of us, to see, before now, a party in the middle of will unlawful merriment, when surprised by some one, some master or superior, whom they respected! The moment his eye falls on them, they lose at once all heart, hang down their heads in shame, and wish that they could sink into the depths of the earth,—any where to escape his stern and righteous rebuke. Such is the merriment of sinners now. But how is it that they do not tremble, bowing the head in shame, when the voice of God in the Gospel surprises and detects them in a revelry as wicked as that of a felon on the point to suffer?

The plain truth is, that all rational and well-conditioned minds *are sobered* that is, become grave, and thoughtful, and self-collected, by the contemplation

of any important object, or any great and solemn event, even of an earthly nature. No particular credit is due to them for it; for such is the course of nature! And, unless we have greatly injured our instinct of good, and our perceptions of right and wrong, it really cannot be otherwise. And exactly the same is it, in spiritual matters, where a man is in reality and truth a Christian. The constant presentation to the thoughts of heaven and hell, the misery of the one and the bliss of the other; the nature of sin, and of God's wrath against it; the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the tremendous consequences which will follow from our being called away to meet our God, before we are prepared;—*all these things*, whether we will or no, do give a sober and solemn character to the whole soul, and its thoughts and affections.

Judge for yourselves, brethren! In the first place, if a man will be profited nothing who should gain the whole world

and lose his own soul, why should he, as a mere matter of *calculation*, waste life, and squander the sweat of his brow upon that which is not bread? You see, that, in a moment, if there is any deep and real sense of things eternal, the value of everything earthly sinks in proportion. I do not mean, of course, that, though the heavenly things have the first place, earthly things have none. A man still, as is his duty, is active and industrious in that station of life to which God has called him. I do not question that. But as to *fixing his heart upon earthly honours and earthly riches*, the thing is impossible. He cannot carry them away with him when he dieth, neither can his pomp follow him; nothing can follow him but his good deeds—deeds of faith. It is treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, for which he labours. Though he uses, therefore, such goods as God has given him, he abuses them not. He is sober therein. And their chief value, after he has food

and raiment, is the way in which they may be made to minister to heavenly things and the glory of God.

Nay, so it is even in the highest of earthly enjoyments,—those affections within our own family, the love of wives and husbands, and brothers and sisters, and fathers and mothers, by far the best and purest of worldly things, and with much of a heavenly nature about them. Even *on these* he does not, with an intemperate and drunken heart, build over much. They are God's gifts, and are dear beyond words to describe it to his heart. But God the giver is dearer still! And He remembers Him who said, “He that loveth father or mother, or wife or children, more than me, is not worthy of me.” So that there is this strange result,—strange that is, to the eye of the world,—that while the true Christian's heart is more *tender and full of love* to all men, and much more to his own flesh and blood, than that of any unrenewed and unconverted nature, yet at the same

time, in another sense he *loves them less*. And for this reason, that to One only is all the heart and soul surrendered, the only bright One, and great, and glorious, the exhaustless fountain of all bliss, and Author of all good things, Him who made him and preserves him, and redeemed him, the eternal God, his Father which is in heaven. In love for him there can be no excess, no intemperance of soul. All is too little. You will see, therefore, that even in the best of things earthly, the Christian's heart is sober and temperate. Much more is it impossible for him to pile up wildly, like another Babel, scheme on scheme of future joy and happiness upon the earth! Whether it be on gains that are to come, or greatness, or pleasure, or any of those other idols, some better and some worse, which men's fancy contrives to dress out with such beauty, and bewitching colours. As bright they are as the clouds which you sometimes see at sunset, but with just as little substance about them,—a little mist

and vapour, and a few bright colours, and nothing more. The Christian *knows* that on earth is no stable happiness, and that they who think there is, and then act as though they thought so, are only building houses upon the sand which the next tide will sweep away.

Now this calm and scriptural mode of viewing things, this *cold* temperament of mind, as some may think it, is what the apostle means when he bids us to be sober. It is what we have ourselves prayed for this very day, when, in the words of our Church, we said, "And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter, live a godly, righteous, and *sober* life, to the glory of thy holy name."

But the apostle in the text tells you further, not only that we must be thus sober, if we would win the heavenly crown, but we must "*watch*." We must ever be upon our guard, that is, always awake and vigilant, on the look out for danger, and ready to resist it like men who are contending

for their lives. And you see how naturally this command of sobriety precedes that of constant *watchfulness*. For we all know that if a soldier is to keep watch effectually, and to guard everything safely from a surprise on the part of the enemy, the most rigid temperance is necessary. He must practise the most cautious abstinence from any excess which might dull his vigilance, and dispose his eyes to sleep. In like manner, it is idle to talk of a man's keeping a constant spiritual watch over himself, and being prepared, as all *true Christians* must be, every moment that he lives, to render up an account to his Lord, if he is—I will not say given to drunkenness and gluttony, for that, after all, is the exception among Christians,—but if his heart is overcharged with the cares of this life, which is a common case; if he is drowned in its business, in its gains or in its pleasures! It is absolutely impossible to unite the two, and we had better not attempt it. It is only trying under

another form to serve God and mammon. I am sure that to keep daily watch, to have our loins girded and our lamps burning, like men who wait for their Master's coming, and yet at the same time to throw our whole hearts and souls into our worldly pursuits, is just as impossible. They cannot go together. At the same time, it must be freely confessed, that to the undisciplined heart of man, there is nothing which is more grievous than this. *Every one's heart* tells him that the thought of this *unceasing* care, this keeping the heart awake and the eyes wide open,—with a view to our *daily* spiritual warfare, is very difficult. Nay, this unwearied and exclusive watching over the soul, which makes *everything else* minister unto it, is to many and many who are called Christians, *almost intolerable*. To be always—*always* having this at the bottom of our souls, and even, in our worldly business, that it should be our leading principle, this is a hard saying; who can bear it? We cannot help it, bre-

thren! It is no fault of those whom God has called to preach the Gospel in Christ's Church. *So it is.* We can only say to you, that in coming to Christ you come, not to ease, but to struggle and difficulty. It is your vow in holy baptism. We are by profession soldiers, whose business it is to deal like men with danger and pain. "Watch and pray," saith our Lord, "what I say unto you, I say unto all. *Watch.*"

Still less can it be expected that anything but the Spirit of God upon the heart can render acceptable that mighty christian duty, implying and containing in itself all others, which it is, in the last place, the principal object of the great apostle to inculcate. The end is at hand; therefore we are to be sober, and we are to watch; why or wherefore? only that we may be fit for *something* else, that we may pray. "Be sober, and watch *unto prayer.*" But, you may say, do we not see prayer offered to God without this spirit, and without this preparation, with-

out this laborious forethought, and fasting and watching, and toilsome constraint upon ourselves? "It seems to me," a man may say, "easy enough to pour forth a fit form of words from our lips, to ask blessings from Almighty God, from time to time, and then an end of it. Just as I might present a request to a fellow man, with sufficient deference and respect, without disturbing every thing else within me and without me." Yes, this is indeed easy,—the easiest thing in the world to do. But this is not prayer, but only an idle imposture, in its stead, a mere imitation of the reality. You might just as well call the body, when the soul has left it, *a man*, as style the utterance of certain words from the outward lips, a prayer. Indeed, indeed, dear brethren, the words are the very least part of it. They are, at best, only the outside sign and indication of it. The seat of prayer is in the heart. It is, verily and indeed, the lifting up of the inward soul to Almighty God. All without

this, becomes but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Prayer is the whole christian life poured out into one act, and therein beautifully and harmoniously combined. *Is faith a christian grace ?* Well, in prayer here it is ; a full trust in the atoning merits of Jesus Christ who, with his own hands, presents before Almighty God the supplications of his saints ; a sure and certain confidence that from the heaven of heavens, where He sits, He heareth his servants, and hath compassion upon his children. *Is hope a christian grace ?* Here then it is ; hope of mercy, hope of pardon, hope that sustains the feeble knees and the failing heart, the hope of that unfading crown, which is laid up at God's right hand for his faithful soldiers and servants. *Is love a christian grace ?* Here it is ; love to all men, to them who love us, to them who hate us, to all whom God hath made, that blessed charity without which we dare not ask forgiveness of our sins ; *love to Him*

that gave Himself for us, and died that we may live, a heart full of gratitude for his unspeakable mercies. Love to Him, the very crumbs from whose table we are not worthy to gather up, and without whom we, who are but dust and ashes, should not presume to speak to Him that sitteth in heaven. Is sorrow for sin a christian *grace*? Here then it is. Is a holy joy and gladness, the natural pouring out of a child's heart to a tender and indulgent parent, a *grace*? *That* too is here!

Why should I detain you longer? you see how it is—*faith, hope, love, humility, joy*, all that makes up the changed and regenerated heart, rising up together in one flame, and consecrated sacrifice, are the elements out of which acceptable prayer is made. Is this a matter of course? is this, think you, brethren, an easy thing, to be disposed of with as little thought and trouble as an every-day request to an earthly superior? Is this a thing to be taken up and laid down in spare moments, to be

commenced without preparation, and carried on without earnestness, and terminated without reflection? Surely the apostle is right in making watchfulness and sobriety conditions of it. Nay, the most precious gifts of the Spirit from above are necessary to hallow it. And will the Spirit be shed forth on the indifferent, the worldling, and the formalist; on those who watch not, nor are sober? Nay, when prayer is poured forth from the most saintly heart, Christ must present it to God, before it can be acceptable. And does the Saviour stand in waiting, think you, on the pleasure of men who pray to Him with their lips, while their heart is far from Him? It cannot be. But, on the other hand, great are the wonders which prayer works, when offered in this sober and devout spirit. Prayer brings us into an awful and most sweet communion with the Father of spirits. Prayer brings down God into the heart,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Prayer conquers temptation; prayer opens the

gates of heaven, and like a sword in the hand of a strong man, mightily prevails *over the world, the flesh, and the devil*. Dear brethren, to be a Christian and a man of prayer, are the same things. It is bound up with the christian life; it unites us to heaven. It is the soul's wings, without which it cannot rise. Pray, pray, and ever be praying, in the house of God and out of it, in your chamber and in the world, everywhere and in every thing. "Pray without ceasing!" Let lips and heart and soul be ever tuned to it, and ready for it. This is the best advice which can be given to Christians.

One remark more, and I have done. It is reported of a great philosopher, that reading the fifth chapter of Genesis, where it is said that such and such lived, and yet there comes the burden still, "he died;" Seth lived nine hundred and twelve years, and he died; Enos lived nine hundred and five years, and he died; Methuselah nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died;

he was so smitten by the thought of *death and eternity*, that it changed his whole frame and course of life in an instant. The powers of the world to come were upon him—the sense that the end of all things was at hand. He rose up an altered man. O that God would do the same to us. All mankind from the beginning have died; and you must die soon! The end of all things is at hand. Be sober, therefore, and watch unto prayer!

Let us pray to our heavenly Father, who has had compassion upon his children, and, remembering that we are but dust, has opened a new and living way by which we may approach the throne, even Jesus Christ the righteous, to give us faith, and hope, and love, that we may draw nigh unto Him in this blessed Son's name! Let us pray Him to give us the Spirit of prayer and supplication. For so shall our hearts and souls rise unto Him, as the incense, and the words of our lips as the morning and evening sacri-

rice. For thou alone, O God, art He that hearest the prayer, and unto thee shall all flesh come. Grant this, O Lord, for thy dear Son's sake. Amen.

SERMON VII.

MATT. xxiv. 14.—“ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.”

THROUGHOUT the whole of this discourse our Lord combines together two awful manifestations of his power; one the destruction of Jerusalem, for the impenitent rejection of the Gospel and the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. The other, the destruction of the whole world and all that it contains, when its sins shall be ripe.

Both of these events are *judgments*. They are acts *of justice*, that is, wherein retribution is given according to the works done, during the time of man's trial, be

they good or evil. Both are the last steps of God's dispensations towards men ; in the one case, the breaking up in wrath of the law of Moses ; in the other, the consummation of the Gospel of Christ. Only in this they differ, that the final judgment of the quick and dead is God's unchangeable decree, touching the whole world we live in, which shall then be purged in fire, and the generations of mankind, who shall then enter on their eternal state. It is, therefore, unspeakably more tremendous than the other. And, therefore, all the images of terror in which Christ clothes his coming to take vengeance upon Jerusalem, have a further meaning than that. The turning the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, the failing of all men's hearts for fear, and the shaking of the powers of heaven, are to be taken as representations of what will really find its full accomplishment only in the judgment-day !

And so in that *sign* of the coming of the Son of man, which is mentioned in the

text, the preaching of the Gospel over all the world; it belongs to both. For before the destruction of Jerusalem, incredible as such a rapid spread of truth appears, there was hardly a corner of the world, as then known, in which the light of the Gospel had not shone. Beautiful on the mountains of heathenism were the feet of them that brought good tidings,—that published peace. So is it rapidly coming to pass at the present time, when the dimensions of the globe we live in, are more than *doubled* by the discovery amidst the waters, of great continents, which in ancient times were unknown to mankind; and as compared with the apostles' time, it is almost a new world altogether. God hath poured out his Spirit again, as at the first, upon all flesh. He hath stirred up the hearts of his faithful people to spread his word anew throughout all the world. You might almost say that the *day of Pentecost* itself is come over again, to aid in the spread of the Gospel. For though the

tongues of fire descend not on us, nor the sound of the mighty rushing wind, yet there is hardly a language, however savage, in which the Word of life may not now be read. We need no *gift of tongues*, save that which learned men possess in the abilities which God hath given them. However, certain it is, that over sea and land, the word of God *runneth*, as the Psalmist says, prophetic as he is, amidst the clouds of the law, of the glories of the Gospel. Nay, it *runneth* VERY swiftly

But this is not all which the text declares. There is a very awful and mysterious limitation by which this universal announcement of the word is accompanied. "It shall be preached," says our Lord, "as a *witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.*" This is not what a heart aflame with the love of God, and a fancy kindled by the glorious descriptions of the kingdom of Christ, which fill the prophets, would probably have expected. On the contrary, the preaching of the Gospel, as

the power of God unto salvation, conquering all hearts, and going forth as a new creation, to put life into the dead souls of men, as the Spirit, at first, quickened the torpid waters, seems more *natural*. And then, when all nations should be gathered into the fold, and the kingdom of Christ has become universal, we should have anticipated perhaps, that the Son of man would sit upon the throne of his glory, and come and gather his saints unto Him, that where He is, they might be also ! But, alas ! such is not the case. The success of the Gospel shall bear no proportion at all, either to its claims upon men's acceptance, to the glorious manifestation of God's love which shines in it and about it, or to the earnestness and self-devotedness with which the ministers of the Word shall proclaim it throughout the world. It shall not be for a *salvation*,—a glory,—but for a *witness*,—*no more*.

And so, our Lord says, in another passage ; “ shall the Son of man, when he

cometh, find FAITH on the earth ! I tell you *nay*." It shall be an infidel age—an age of unbelievers, in the midst of light and evidence—an age of mockers and scorers, amidst solemn truths—when men say, "*Tush*, how can God perceive it?" and "where is the promise of His coming? Behold! all things remain as they have been from the beginning of the world!" But reckon not upon that, ye sinners, and hard of heart! For the word of God standeth sure, in spite of all. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or one tittle of the spirit's words. Eat and drink as you will, and be merry, and lay up in barns your harvests for many years; and go the scoffing, careless way of the world. There is nothing new in that. Men as wise in their own conceit as you, have done the same; and yet have mocked, and jested, and reasoned themselves into ruin! "For as the days of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving

in marriage," says our Lord, "until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not, until the flood came, and TOOK THEM ALL AWAY." "So also," he repeats, that it may sink into the hearts of them that hear, "shall the coming of the Son of man be."

And there are many other passages in Holy Scripture, all conveying the same tremendous and most afflicting truth. When, for example, our Lord says, at the end of his parable of the marriage supper, *many are called, but few are chosen!* It is evident that He does not confine his remarks to the Jews who heard his own preaching, but really means to embrace all mankind! And similarly does he speak, when he tells his disciples to the world's end, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and FEW there be that find it. WIDE is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there are that go in thereat." "*Fear not, little flock!*" Fear

not, that is, ye that shall love and serve me, as your only Lord and Master, ye that, amidst the pleasures and riches of the world, still look to me as your exceeding great reward ! Though you are, and ever will be, but a feeble band, scattered up and down the godless wilderness of the world, one here and one there ; yet fear not ! It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom ! The kingdom, you see, is reserved for the few, not the many ! for the few accept it—the many reject it.

But this awful representation of the godless condition of the world at large, even in the midst of the light and the truth ; and the resistance, which, taken altogether, the whole race of man, the souls for whom Christ died, shall still offer, and have ever offered to the spiritual reception of the Gospel, is, after all, a matter of our own daily experience. Almost all solemn truths, in fact, touching the hardness of man's heart and the dealings

of God with his creatures, we need not go to the world's end for them ; they are under our eyes. Try it here ! Make what allowance you please for the saints of God, true of heart, and earnest of purpose, whom God hath raised up among us ! Put out of the question that most blessed and comforting sight to behold, the whole families among us wherein small and great are united by the love of Christ, and God seems to dwell in the midst of the household, as in a temple ! Make these exceptions, and any other which reason or experience may require, and yet no one can say, that among the greater part of the christian people, among whom our lot is cast, —our brethren according to the flesh,—the Gospel is really *a life*, a new creation, *the power of God unto salvation*.

Of course, if you take the Gospel as a mere rule of decent morals, if you empty it of the power of the Spirit, the conversion of the soul, and those heavenly graces without which it is but a dead body, a

form without breath or spirit; in short, if you make it, in a greater or less degree, not the Gospel of Christ, but the *gospel of the world*, with the name of Christ fraudulently or ignorantly attached to it, you may think otherwise. You may go in and out, and rise and take your rest, in the delusion that most men, whose foreheads have been bathed by the baptismal waters, are really the servants—the chosen and elect for future glory—of Him whose name they bear! But I speak only to those among you who have received into their hearts the faith of Christ crucified! They know how different, how indescribably different is the name from the thing—the *profession* of discipleship from the power of the changing and creating Spirit! And, at all events, if this truth be hidden from them, it is only from those who are not called to deal with the spiritual necessities of their brethren. As may well be the case, christian hearts, living perhaps in a holy atmo-

sphere, in the bosom of some godly family, are here and there unconscious that their own circle is not a faithful picture of the world without them ! But be that as it may, it is *forced* home, in the most undoubted certainty, and sorrowful bitterness, upon the heart of the christian minister.

For myself, I complain not of my ministry. It has its fruits and consolations, as well as its disappointments. But often it is sickening, and saddening, as years roll on, to discern, even in those you love and respect, no, or small, advance in holiness, no growth in the knowledge of God. It is discouraging beyond what those who have never tried it can imagine, to see the word of God, the seed which ought to bring forth life eternal, scattered broadcast over the barren ground, and yet no *harvest* follow, only a few ears here and there. It needs much comfort from above, and strengthening from the Spirit of grace, to brace up the labourer in the

vineyard to a task so often thankless, even among those for whom he would give his own life also, as the apostle says, to be the instrument of salvation to them. And but that he knows it to be God's will; but that the Lord and his apostles, in the midst of the nominal conversion of the world, wrought with no better success; above all, but for the hope that the day of God may come, when the Word, long preached in vain, may grow up in many a heart to life everlasting; the preaching of the Gospel would be, not a joy, but a burden of sorrow beyond the bearing!

And there is another consideration, which, if you look at the Gospel in a family, or an individual parish, or a kingdom, throws a deeper gloom on a state of things already black with wrath and sorrow! It is *conceivable*, for instance, that when almighty God revealed himself to mankind in his blessed Son, the offer of glory and free mercy in his atoning blood might indeed have been an

unspeakable blessing to those who accepted it, and yet not have *turned to a curse* to them who did not open their hearts and arms to welcome the message. So that, at all events, they might have been no worse off than they were *before*, in reckoning with God at the judgment-seat. Subject, indeed, they must have been, even then, to an awful inquisition before the Searcher of hearts, and responsible to the law written in the natural conscience. But they might not have been tried by what they rejected, nor condemned by what they did not believe. And, to judge by what I know of men, some such thought not unfrequently suggests itself to the soul. Certainly, whether reasonable or no, it is conceivable. But the very contrary is the case. There is *no middle course*, but either life or death *af er* the Gospel is preached. Mighty and awful is the word of God, and beyond searching out are the mysteries of the eternal nature which are within it. It is a message of love, but yet wrath

travels hand in hand with it ! There is life carried forth on the breath of it to all the ends of heaven ; and yet it is, at the same time, a consuming fire.

In fact, as God is, so is the Word. Love, holiness, righteousness, pardon, judgment—all pure, adorable, awful, infinite things combined into one, in a marvellous power and harmony. In oneword, brethren, where the Gospel does not save, it condemns—wherever it is not life, it is death. Wherever it is hid, saith the apostle, “ it is hid from them that are *lost*.” “ Had I not spoken unto them,” saith our Lord, “ they had not had sin ; but *now their sin remaineth*.” “ He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall *be damned* !” Hence that awful description of our Lord, in the book of Revelation, “ Out of his mouth went a *sharp two-edged sword*.” The *word of truth* and salvation, that is, which, while it pierceth the heart of the saints, and healeth while it pierceth, yet hath

power to slay both the soul and the body of the wicked !

Hence, the day of the Redeemer, when the desire of all nations shall come unto his temple, is described as a *great and a terrible* day, in which heaven and earth are shaken. Hence too, not only are the garments of Christ rich and glorious as the vestments of a high priest, but, like the garments of a warrior in the middle of the battle, they are *rolled in blood*. “ Who is this that cometh from Edom with *dyed garments* from Bozrah ? ” dyed, that is, in the blood of his enemies ! So that an irrecoverable change comes over a man’s relation to God, the *instant* the Gospel of Christ has reached his ear. He is no more the *same man*. Whether his heart be changed or not, he is transported into a different world. He is involved in more awful responsibilities. He is judged by a sterner law. Not heaven and earth together can undo what is done or restore him to his former state. Between his

past and present condition before almighty God *there is a great gulf fixed!* Be it one man, or a whole nation, it matters not! *The Gospel has been preached.* Christ hath been offered to him. It cannot be changed. It cannot be recalled any more than the years that are gone! "Had I not spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but *now* their sin remaineth." So that, look, I pray you, at the point to which our argument has brought us! regard it with stedfast eyes, and like men who are ready to look the truth, awful as it may be, strait in the face.

It is clear then, alike from scripture and the state of the world, as we see it round about us, that the marvellous scheme of redemption through Christ Jesus, the mighty mystery of godliness which shineth, like the law, with the love and glory of God, shall prove, if you look to those among whom it has been preached, *not life but death; not acquittal, but condemnation.* Nay, though it is not God's *will* that any

one sinner should perish, but that all should be converted and live, yet far more shall *die*—*die of their own fault* and election of evil,—than shall *live*. Not only are men ruined by temptation, and condemned by righteous wrath, but, by an awful contradiction, love is their sentence of death; amazing mercy only an instrument of a deeper and more irretrievable destruction. There is more in this than *we* can see into; mysteries on mysteries, clouds on clouds, are round the throne of the Eternal! “How unsearchable are thy judgments O God, and thy ways are past finding out!”

Why, therefore, it may be asked, do we send the missionary into foreign and barbarous lands, not in the *certainty* of converting whole nations, but in the knowledge that, according to God’s just dealings, the glorious message which He sends will condemn more than it saves? Why does the minister of Christ take the everlasting gospel in his hand and go forth,

year after year, among his flock, while, all the time, if he knows not of a certainty, yet he hath great reason to fear, that to many and many, and perhaps most of those among whom he ministers, he may be the bearer of judgments and not of mercies? I answer, because it is the will and the command of Almighty God, who, from the beginning of the world until now, hath sent forth his servants unto men, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear! Because Christ, our Lord and Master, hath laid this charge upon his church unto the world's end: "*Go ye, and teach all nations.*" And secondly, while we know not God's deep counsels, and do not dare to search into them, yet we can easily understand, that all the relations and purposes of God in the marvellous gospel, are not and cannot as yet be comprehended by us. Whilst we are sure that if we could see into other worlds and the beings who inhabit them, we should discover how God's glory, and the good of

his intelligent creatures are promoted, as well by the condemning power of the gospel to them that reject it, as by its mercies unto them that believe. Either way it fulfils his will, and cometh not back unto Him void. As the prophet says, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth—so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please."

And in the third place, without striving to penetrate into that which, till we enter into the other world, is necessarily concealed from our eyes, we can easily understand the meaning of our Lord when He says, "that it shall be preached as a *witness* unto all nations." And surely—surely it is so. The gospel is condemnation unto them who accept it not, because it carries *its own testimony* along with it. Because it cometh from the light, and is light, and from the holy, and is holy.

And, inasmuch as the same great Being who hath framed the gospel, hath framed the heart too, we are sure that when it is preached, though by the lips of *men*, yet the inward soul confesseth it to be holy, and just, and good. It confesseth it because God compels the confession !

“ Blessed are the peacemakers ! Blessed are the merciful ! Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness ! Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Nay, nay, christian brethren, the book of God, which we preach, beareth the witness in itself. We care not that men refuse it ; we care not that, without nominally refusing it, men empty it of its power, and its sanctity, and its awfulness ; we even care not that both the life denies it and the lips reject it, for still there is something at the bottom of the soul which echoes it back, and a voice which, at the very moment of rejection, says, “ *O man, reject it not ; it is true—it is true.*” And not only is it a

witness for itself to each individual man in the depths of the soul, where God communes with him; but it shall be so when the inhabitants of other worlds come down to ours to witness the judgment. It shall there be a witness for God's ways with men before the assembled universe. Then shall come up, clad in the robes of the Lamb, distant nations, less blessed than we, in this especial land of God, and shall lift up their voices before the judgment-seat, and shall condemn us, because they have come to God with less light than we. The gospel shall witness with them against us. Then will Sodom and Gomorrah, and Tyre and Sidon, come up and witness against Bethsaida and Chorazim, and the reprobate city of God, unrepentant Zion. "Woe unto thee, Chorazim! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida," and the gospel shall confirm the witness.

And how shall it be with us? Look before the judgment-seat and behold how the trial proceeds. See there a family of

sons and daughters, and souls of many servants, condemned to the everlasting woe, and thus accusing him who should have been to them as a minister of God, and hath betrayed his trust: "Thou didst never teach us the ways of God; thou didst never rebuke us for our sins. There never came from thee the words of life, and we were sinful and wicked because there was none to guide us. Woe was it to us on the day that thou wast our father and our master!" Then will come forth the sentence from the throne, "Depart, thou wicked father and godless master, into the eternal fire. These witness against thee, and my word."

Then will there be many a faithless minister dragged to the judgment, and the souls that he has murdered or lulled to peace by a false gospel, shall lift up their voice and say, "O thou didst never preach Christ unto us, or we would have come unto Him. Thou didst teach us peace—peace, when there was no peace, or our

dead consciences would have been awakened, and we should have sorrowed for our sins and been saved. Woe to us and to thee that thou didst not feed the flock of Christ." Then shall come the voice out of the throne, "Depart from me, thou false shepherd, and murderer of the flock. These witness against thee, and my word."

Then shall come too, many an impenitent sinner, and even sometimes whole flocks who have had the word of life preached to them, and have not received it. And then shall come forth their ancient minister, and, albeit clad in his garments of glory, they shall know him again; and the face, though now changed into the face of an angel, and the voice, and the form that went in and out among them. And he shall say, "Lord, I warned the sinner, and I laid the whole gospel of life before him. I neither added to it nor diminished aught from it. Faith and repentance, and free grace in thy blood, and

the surrender of the soul to thee, I preached it all, as thou didst give it me in charge to do." And there shall rise up before the sinner's face, the day, and the hour, and the discourse which his inmost soul acknowledged to be true, and did not receive. His countenance shall fall, and the worm that never dies shall layhold upon the self-condemned heart, and the flame that never shall be quenched shall begin to burn! "Depart from me, ye fearful and unbelieving Christians, that heard the word and yet received it not with joy, neither were my faithful soldiers and servants, but cowardly soldiers and slothful servants. He who was the minister of the word to you witnesseth against you, and my word."

And so it shall be with all the nations that shall stand before the throne. And there shall be a fearful winnowing, and sifting of the wheat from the chaff, and the elect, in the same moment, shall be gathered together, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. In the

same parish one shall be taken, and another left; in the same family, shall one be taken, and another left. As the innermost soul shall witness or no, that they accepted the whole Gospel as it is in Jesus with sincerity, and the incarnate *Word*, who was the life of it, shall testify from the throne that they embraced it. Oh! brethren, may I and you be numbered among that blessed and innumerable multitude, unto whom their Lord, who knoweth his own, and forgetteth them not, may testify in that day! It will be a joyful thing to hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou unto the joy of thy Lord."

It will be a joyful thing, and full of bliss unspeakable, to put on our garments of glory in that day, washed, beyond the sun's brightness, in the blood of the Lamb. For then shall we catch from the face from which heaven and earth shall flee away, looks of divine love, and the image of the holiest shall pass into us, and make

us like the Lord ! And when we look, as we ascend into heaven, on the woe of those against whom the Word hath testified, and brought them into the eternal torment, we shall say, like the angel in the Revelation, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus." "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."

SERMON VIII.

MATT. xxiv. 40, 41.—“Then shall two be in the field; one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”

THIS is a very striking portion of the awful description of the vengeance of Almighty God upon Jerusalem, the words of which, as they come from our Lord's lips, are *heavy* with threats and terrors. They make the heart sink within us, with dread of the things that shall come upon the earth.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the

stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." But though this universal shaking and darkening of heaven and earth, men's hearts failing them for fear, and the sea and the waves roaring, sets overwhelmingly before our eyes the tribulation of the last days, the *suddenness* of the visitation is still more vividly represented. The final stroke shall come as it were in a *moment*. As it was when the flood came in the days of Noah; as it was when the windows of heaven were opened, to rain fire and brimstone upon accursed Sodom and Gomorrah; as was the cry which woke the sleeping Virgins as midnight—Behold! the bridegroom cometh! so shall it be then. Fly for your lives! escape to the mountains, lest ye die! The fire and the blood, and the armies of destruction are upon us! Nay, turn not back, there is not an instant to lose; on, on, on, if you would escape the ruin! Let him which is on the housetop, not come down to take any

thing out of the house ; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this day, nor ever shall be.

And then, when the place of refuge shall have been reached, shall come to pass what happens now-a-days, after a great earthquake, or the tumult and agony of a shipwreck, when the vessel has gone to pieces. When they have themselves escaped from the flood and the fire, men look round and count the survivors ! The wife looks about for the husband, and the husband for the wife ; and the brother for the sister, and the sister for the brother ; and the parents for the children, and the children for the parents ! And they see who are saved, and who are swallowed up. And it is as it was in Ramah of old,—lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her

children ! Even so shall it be. There shall be two in the field, one shall be taken, and another left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken, and another left ! Even such shall be the separation at the last day, between those whose lot and labours upon earth have been cast together ; with this addition, that the parting shall be eternal, and the gulf between those who were once inseparable, such that none shall pass over it. "Between us and you," says Abraham, "there is a great *gulf fixed*, so that they who would come to you from us cannot, neither can they pass to us who would come from thence."

And, indeed, I know not anything, brethren, which enables the mind so much as this, *completely* to realize the final and essential change in the constitution of all things which the judgment shall bring in, never again to change. It will be indeed a *regeneration*, a new birth of all things, material and spiritual ; new laws, a new world, new bodies, new relations and

societies, shall in a moment rise out of the dissolution of the old. The worn-out elements of the earth, shall be transformed by the purifying fire, as well as the souls and bodies of men, by the will and power of God! "Behold!" says God, "I make all things new!" "And I saw, says St. John, "a new heaven, and a new earth!"

Now we have no difficulty in bringing this home to ourselves, in a loose and general way! That the multitudes of the ungodly shall be turned for evermore into the place of torment, and that the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ, is quite familiar to us, so that the thought of it, so far as it implies an eternal separation of the evil and the good, awakens no special emotion in the soul! It is a striking picture, an awful fact, that is all. It is not within, but without us! We are rather spectators of it, than actors and sharers in it; the heart is not stirred at all. It becomes more practical, when we reflect that

the inhabitants of the same town, or the same village, or the same street, whose faces and voices, and goings in and out, are familiar to us, and seem inseparable from the little world in which we live, shall, when the judgment comes, no more dwell together ; but be everlastingly apart ! That we shall see them and hear them no more ! They shall be as though they had never been. Think of your own neighbours, and every-day acquaintances in this manner ; surely it moves the heart awfully !

But more than that, few are the families that assemble daily round the same hearth, and are knit together, each to the other, as very pieces of each other's heart, which shall meet again in the kingdom of heaven ! The child of many tears and prayers, over whom the heart of father and mother has been poured out in its fulness, with the love that never slumbers nor sleeps upon earth, shall be seen no more, perhaps, when the parents join the circle of Christ in their glory. The child shall look in

vain among the angelic ranks, the hosts of the mighty and bright ones, for the parent whom he tenderly revered on earth. Man and wife shall no more be one flesh, but twain; and once loved friends, and relatives, parts of oneself, shall be as far as heaven and hell asunder! Fiercely shall the breath of God go forth, and winnow, searchingly and unerringly, the chaff from the wheat!

Now, nobody's heart, I suppose, is so hard as not to be affected by such a prospect, which, nevertheless, is just as certain as it is awful! And assuredly, this everlasting breaking up of those various and tender ties which bind men together in this world,—ties without which life would be a wilderness where each hated and plundered the other, without love, or friendship,—proves how great the change, and complete the revolution, in that world to come, will be. Like to like! godly to the godly! wicked to the wicked!

But so it is, in part, already. The line

is drawn *now* ! For not only, in lands where the true light shineth, do we witness the blessed influences of the Gospel, its transforming power, and its vivid reflection, on earth, of the things of God in heaven ; but *its judging*, and *its separating* power. It has ever been so, and ever must be so. There is a union, as deep as the innermost spirit, on one hand, and yet a sundering, in the very same proportion, on the other. A peace, such as the world understandeth not, deep as the sea-depths which neither wind nor tide disturbeth, and yet a spiritual war and discord, are the fruits of the same power. These, opposite as they seem, yet dwell side by side, in the earthly unfolding, and human action of the Gospel of Christ. I say *earthly* and *human* action, because these are not the fruits of the divine scheme itself, which is perfect love, and peace, and joy, and life ; but of the evil heart, and perverse temper, and manifold sinfulnesses of those to whom it is sent ! Good things turn to evil, and light

to darkness, when brought into contact with sin ! And so says our Lord ! “ Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you nay, but rather division. For, from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father ; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother ; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law.” So that, though enclosed in the same walls, the hearts and spirits of men are far as heaven and earth asunder ! The separation *is made* ; it has only to be proclaimed and perfected.

In fact, it is only part of a general law, a *universal* truth. *All* do not accept the gospel, by which alone life can conquer death, or fallen beings enter into the kingdom of heaven. Some believe the things which are spoken, and are one with Christ here and hereafter. Some believe not, and must perish in their unbelief. This

is seen in all families, and in all circles, more or less. One is with God, one with the world, one hath life, another death.

Now I am not going to say that there is not a great mystery in this! There is a dark and deep one, far more so than we can explain by any difference that we can discern in men's hearts and tempers, under precisely the same outward circumstances! Doubtless God is clear when He is judged, and no one perishes under the gospel without such a wilful rejection of the truth, as deserves God's wrath and fiery indignation. But this does not unfold *all* the mystery, nor near all. Verily the Spirit, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, and God giveth grace or withholdeth it, according to his own good will and pleasure! On this, however, I shall not dwell. I shall confine myself to what is practical, and offers real difficulties, such as we can define and handle, in this eternal severing by the law of the gospel, of the godly from the ungodly, however near and dear ac-

according to the flesh. It is a wretched thought, you may say; true, but the effect of this on our own happiness now is alleviated in many ways!

And first, the fact is often completely hidden from us in this world. We are mercifully ignorant of each other's inmost hearts, while they are nevertheless perfectly open in the sight of God. And we are thus not unfrequently enabled to live in christian joy and love and hope, perhaps, without a doubt or a cloud, with those from whom, nevertheless, the searching fires of the judgment-day may finally separate us. And then, in this world, there is always *hope*, a sweet and comforting looking forward to the future, in spiritual as in earthly things, where some dear and favourite object has not yet been accomplished. The christian graces are not the work of a moment. They wax and wane, and are sometimes fainter and sometimes brighter, and, both in ourselves and in others, we see with shame and sorrow

that the path which we tread heavenwards, is not a straight line, but has many turnings and windings. Its direction *on the whole* is towards the heavenly Jerusalem, and the distant towers are not out of our sight; but our weariness is sometimes great, and our knees and feet unsteady, and we faint by the way! So what we feel in our own bosoms makes us, perforce, tender and gentle, and we are ever thinking and judging the best of those whom we love.

And, even though neither affection nor friendship can confuse the truths which the Spirit of God has written upon his heart, yet rightly, and after the rule of heavenly charity, the Christian hopeth and trusteth all things, where there is no manifest rejection of the truth, or hatred of God's spiritual law! And then again God hath his own ways, and waiteth for his own seasons, in dealing with the souls of men! And sometimes sooner, sometimes later, the dawnings of grace and love

brighten into the perfect day. And upon these glimpses of the spiritual life, and first buddings of what shall hereafter bless us in heaven, gladly and comfortably may we rest in those whom we love!

And of course it is only to men who are earnestly bent on working out their own salvation, that the future separation of which we speak can be the instrument of care and sorrow! They alone whose eyes have been opened, and who are sensible of the value of their own souls, are troubled about those of others! To them who are themselves worldly, and in whose hearts Christ the Saviour hath no place, the thought has no disturbing power, the thing itself no reality. They look with no anxious eye and misgiving heart upon those whom they love, if, perchance, the world has possession of what ought to be God's. The word and fear and love of Christ, have never had a share in fixing their attachment, or attracting their admiration. And, if

thoughts of the world to come ever disturb their peace, they rest in the fool's paradise, that as it is now so shall it be then. "Tush, how should God perceive it? is there knowledge in the Most High?" the world to come is only a repetition of the world that is." And they dream that God is even such an one as themselves, and that there can be love without God, and trust and real joy without holiness, and bliss in forgetfulness of God and an eternal banishment from his presence! It is not to them, therefore, that comfort is needed, under the weight of a most awful thought; but solely to the *children of God* by adoption and grace.

And the very fact that they are so, supplies an answer to the question which so naturally suggests itself! If there must be this eternal severing, what shall supply to the heart of the risen and glorified Christian, the lack of those affections to which so much of his earthly happiness is due, and

from which, however tenderly regarded and treasured, the judgment of the last day may part him? The reply is, in one word, that *God will supply* it; the fulness of Christ shall supply it. The things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, shall give it back a thousand-fold. God is not ONLY power, though power *can* work much for our bliss. God is not MERELY glory and majesty, though they of themselves can transport and elevate the soul to heights beyond our thinking! God is not ONLY purity and inward essential light, spotless and inconceivable, though the full vision of this most divine perfection—stainless goodness—in itself exalts the creature who hath it to an angelic dignity. But He is that *which we crave, love—very love—immense, overflowing.*

It is only checked by sin and limited by the alienation of his creatures! But where they are restored to his image, and brought

back to his fold, it gushes forth upon them *infinitely* and *eternally* ! You admire the watchful, unwearying tenderness, the self-sacrificing devotedness of a good father or mother. You admire the zeal of friendship, the mighty power of love, in wife or husband, or child, to conquer difficulties, and further the happiness of those who are the objects of it. You do right. God forbid that it should be otherwise ! It is a beautiful and a marvellous thing, and hath a mysterious strength given unto it, and is of all merely earthly things, no doubt, the most divine. But it is, after all, only a shadow of the love of God for his redeemed and glorified creatures, his ransomed in Christ Jesus. It is a *mere stray beam* from that fountain and spiritual sun which God is. A friend may change, a mother may forget her sucking child, but, saith Jehovah to Zion, I will never forget thee.

But there is this fundamental mistake

in the question altogether, and the natural doubt which suggests it! A true, or at least an advanced Christian, is, by virtue of that very growth in grace, elevated above his earthly affections, and *independent* of them. Nay, though it seems a contradiction, yet it is not so. At the very moment that his heart is most tender, and hath more of melting and sympathising flesh and blood in it than the man of the world, however gifted with noble affections, his happiness, all the while, even upon earth, depends not upon them. Why? because he is Christ's. Because, after all, he hath not embarked all things in them! The tenderest and most powerful ties upon earth, are yet as nothing to his love for Him that loved him first, and bought him with his blood. They are not idle words, but sober truth, when God says, "*Give me thine heart!*" "He that hateth not *father and mother, and sister and brother* for my sake is not *worthy* of

me," saith Christ. Nay, but he is no loser ! as I have said ! "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked !" How natural the remark ! how marvellous the answer, and yet how natural and satisfying too ! "Yea, blessed rather," said our Lord, "are they that hear the word of God and keep it ! And He looked round on his disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren ! Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother !" Hence, St. Paul says, "*The love of Christ* constraineth us !" "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord !"

Admire, therefore, brethren, the wonderful ways of God, and how He hath knit all things together. He hath made our earthly relationships, and loves, and friendships, not only *images* of the things in heaven, but preparations and schools for them, losing themselves in a higher nature. At the very moment that He makes our earthly being and happiness so to rest upon them, that those who know not God marvel how a state of perfect bliss can exist without them, He hath substituted something else in their room. Nay, by uniting us unto himself He hath made us independent of aught else besides. And yet, by so doing, He hath not absorbed or destroyed our earthly ties, but, in deed and in truth, infinitely exalted them, and preserved all that is holy in them. For instance; He hath made us to be born from a mother's womb, and hang on a mother's breast, and sit upon a father's knee, resting on their protection, and drawing our joy from the

light of their countenance! Well, but He hath done this, that we might have a clear and solid conception of what love and protection to a weak and helpless being are. And so, by the teaching of the gospel, and the training of godly parents, we learn, as heart and reason expand, to look up to Him who is *our Father* in the truest, and deepest, and heavenliest sense. What we once sought in *our parents' eyes* we now seek in his, even love and a protecting tenderness! From them who were his instruments in an earthly birth, we raise heart and thought and all that is within us, to the Creator and Preserver of soul and body!

Do you ask, then, what will supply the place of father and mother in that world to come, if they escape not the wrath? we answer, *God is our Father! We need no other.*

Again. We are early thrown, in those sweet and loving circles which God hath

made for us, into companionship with other beings like ourselves; children, at first, as helpless and dependent as we. And they love us, if they be a christian family, and they share our thoughts, and our very hearts are open to them, and they weep with us, and are glad with us, and we doubt not of their tenderness and sympathy. We have *sisters and brothers*! If we are asked what will make up the lack of them, if we alone should be left, and they be taken, when the destruction cometh unawares? We answer, angels and all blessed spirits are *our brethren*! They are children of the same Father, members of the very same household of faith, and ministering to and fro, even now, true brethren as they are, to save soul and body from wrong and injury. Nay, the Brightest and the Greatest, He whose servants they are, the Son of God, *is our brother*. Even He, according to the flesh and that human nature which He hath never put off, is

very bone of our bone ! We are brothers and heirs together, of the everlasting inheritance which God hath prepared *for us in Him.*

And so, if the question be touching the affection of wives and husbands, still the answer is the same ! It is Christ ! It is God ! He is wife, and friend, and husband, a thousand times over ! “The Lord is my shepherd ! therefore I shall lack nothing.”

Finally,—we know not exactly in what light we shall look back upon this life, the first days and early infancy only of our endless being, when we shall have put on our glory, and begun to reign with Christ. Things, as you know, alter materially, according to the points of view from which we regard them. A house, or a building, or a landscape, is not the same when we look upon it from above, commanding the whole plan, as when we have merely a partial glimpse of it. So will it be then. When we see face to face, and

know even as we are known, we shall not judge and think, and feel as we do, when we see through a glass darkly. Now we catch only God's skirts, we see not his full glory, or the presence that fills heaven and earth. But then He will be *all in all* to us, and the darkness will be gone, and, with capacious minds and loving hearts as well as shining bodies, our occupation will be to dwell on his glory, and to trace the counsels of his wisdom and might. Therefore there will grow *to the full* within us that heavenly temper, which, in some degree, every Christian's heart must be conscious of; the inevitable and holy tendency to measure all things, and all beings, and all that ever is, or was, or shall be, by their relation to God, the only holy, and blessed, and eternal! In proportion as either material things, or rational beings, reflect his image, and obey that eternal law which forbids us to call anything *good* which is separated from

Him who alone is or can be so, shall we value them all. We shall give them, in their measure, a share of that affection which is centred upon Him, round whom all things in heaven and earth, spiritual and material, visible and invisible, do revolve! Even *upon earth*, the truest brother is he who loveth Him that bought us, and who, with childlike trusting heart, can say with us, "Abba! Father!" Even upon earth, the nearest ties which either nature or choice binds us withal, lack utterly, to the true Christian, their power, their consecration, and their heavenly meaning, if the Spirit from above, through Christ Jesus our Lord, hath not been poured out upon them and blessed them.

And when our eyes are fully opened, and our souls exalted into their final likeness to Christ, all earthly bands, which have been unhallowed by love for Him, will fall asunder in a moment. Some

whom we loved we shall love no more ; for they *love not God* ! We see them as they are. All earthliness, and this among the rest, falls away from our souls ! Exactly as on earth, we shake from us even those we once loved, if, instead of the goodness we dreamed of, we find vice or folly. They are not those we thought they were ! We love those whom God loves, and who enter by the gates into that eternal city ! And there shall in no wise enter therein anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life !

Nor will the clear discovery of God's infinite holiness, and the wakening up of the conscience to a full and exquisite sense of the duty and love due to Him, as the sole source of all good, for whom and by whom all things were created, be less overwhelming to the wicked, than comforting and glorious to the saints ! The

very same sensible rushing in of light upon the soul which will make them behold themselves as they are, and abhor the deformity they discover there, will cause them to shrink from their companions in wretchedness, as reflecting the same image, however close or dear the companionship upon earth! Where there is no brightness, nor image of what is good, there can be no love, and the last lingering shadow of it will have departed. The torment in each man's heart will leave no room for sympathy, nor power of compassion for the lot of others. There will, therefore, be no brother or sister; for the earthly relationship will have been dissolved for ever, and no blessed Saviour, or glorified saints, will come to supply its loss. There will be no father or mother; for God is become an avenger, and love turned into a consuming fire! It shall be to the world, and the redeemed, as God saith of Babylon. "And after these things I heard

a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia. Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God. And again they said, Alleluia ! And her smoke ascended for ever and ever."

SERMON IX.

MATT. xxiv. 40, 41.—“ Then shall two be in the field, one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken, and the other left.”

THERE are some reflections on the world to come, as a society, which arise from the view which we took last Sunday of this awful text, which press of time prevented me from then expanding and dwelling on; and to them, by God's blessing, I will call your attention to-day.

1. It is perfectly evident that a very large proportion of this world's arrangements, and the laws by which they are

maintained, are only for a time, and have no value in themselves. For instance, those distinctions of rich and poor, which strike immediately an observer of the present state of things,—distinctions which are essential to the existence, and to the maintenance of human society! They are, in fact, God's own order of things here below, wise and good for its own purposes. But still, could we suppose them eternal, they would be irreconcilable with his attributes of love, holiness, and justice! For power, and rank, and riches, all things the world admires and loves most, and, with the most eager passion strives after, have manifestly, in themselves, no connexion in general, with the merit or virtues of their possessors. Nor, apart from *goodness*, have they, with all their outward glitter and the lip and knee worship they bring with them, any real value or inward substance. They are many of them the things which make the world a confusion. They are *misplaced, misgiven!*

Nor, as far as the outward eye can judge, are the pains and sorrows of body and mind either, in any way distributed, according to the worth or virtue of those who are called to bear them. Nay, not unfrequently, grief and aches of heart and flesh are heaped, like mountains, crushingly and *overwhelmingly*, but for God's supporting and sanctifying Spirit, upon the holiest and the best! Both the one and the other apparent contradiction to God's goodness, seems to have struck mournfully, in his times of depression, the mind of the holy psalmist! And whether we look at the riches and grandeur so profusely heaped on some, and the hunger and nakedness which are the destiny of others; the crying and tears which fill some eyes, and the laughter and joy which sparkle from others, one knows not why or wherefore; the natural feelings of the heart cannot be better described than in his words! "I was grieved at the wicked," he says; "I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity.

For they are in no peril of death ; but are lusty and strong. They come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men ! Lo ! these are the ungodly, these prosper in the world, and these have riches in possession ; and I said, Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency. Then thought I to understand this ; but it was too hard for me, until I *went into the sanctuary of God !*"

And we may say the same. For neither do we comprehend it, till we too have come with prayer and praise into his SANCTUARY, and have heard his holy word, and divine teaching there ! From thence we know of a surety that this world is a place of TRIAL, and this life a mere journey and pilgrimage to another and heavenly land. *Here* then is a comfort at once ! The way is wearisome, and the sun is hot, and the howling wilderness is long, but *Canaan* is at the end of it. We can bear it for a while !

Again. God seeth not as man seeth, but looketh at the heart, and though He is to all a Creator and Preserver, yet He is a tender loving Father only to those who live to Him in Christ Jesus. With them, and in them He dwelleth ! He giveth to them of the light of his countenance, and feedeth them with angels' food, even manna from heaven. Christ is their living bread ! Here, then, is another comfort. We may well do without gold and silver, and the grandeurs and luxuries of this life, whilst we are heirs of glory, and do already in our pilgrimage share in the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Nay more than this. Power and wealth and high station are great and awful *trials*. It is very hard for them that have riches to enter into the kingdom of God ! It is not impossible, thank God ! for to the changing and hallowing Spirit, all things are possible,—but it is exceedingly difficult. The gospel is the consolation and the treasure of the poor. It is in all ages true,

that, compared with the multitudes of the blessed, not many rich, not many mighty, not many learned, as St. Paul says, after this world's knowledge, embrace, with heart and soul, the humbling and soul-subduing gospel! Riches and pleasures, and glittering vanities, with their power to corrupt and bewilder the soul, enervating faith, and melting the true christian manhood, are the special temptations of Satan. "All these things will I give thee," he says, "if thou wilt fall down and worship me!" Hence he is called, and is the God of this world, *dwelling* in the hearts of the children of disobedience! He regulates men's thoughts, words, and deeds, by rules and maxims which are of the darkness and not of the light, and which call evil good, and good evil, put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, and under the name of worldly wisdom, and the opinion of men, wage a perpetual war against the gospel of Christ! "Love not the world," says St. John, "neither the things that are in

the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For ALL that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that *doeth the will of God* abideth for ever."

So far, however, as the frame-work and machinery of this world is of God's institution, the Christian submits himself, joyfully, and for conscience sake, to it; to kings, and queens, and magistrates, and fathers and mothers, and all that are set over him! But he knoweth that the whole fashion of the present world passeth away, like a shadow, and that the outward habitations of the saints shall not be more different from the present world, dim as it is, and dark, and like a work spoiled and marred, than their relation to God and to each other. Yet *all* shall not change either. There shall be a *king* and a *kingdom* still, and not an anarchy, where inde-

pendent wills and ungoverned passions swell and crash together, like a troubled sea. There is no *more sea* there, but *peace*, and the King that reigneth is the King of righteousness! Behold the Lord is King! He hath put on his glorious apparel, and girded Himself with strength! Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

2. There shall be law and order, therefore, in the world to come, for they are the *harmony* of the universe, that bind alike the marvellous structures of heaven and earth, which God hath set in such a perfect beauty, that a constant music cometh out of them. And eternal spirits shall be at once free, and the ever-obedient servants of Him that sitteth on the throne for ever and ever. The *law* is written in *their hearts*, and the law is *love* to Him that made them and redeemed them; and it is become their very innermost nature. They are with Him, and his will is their will, and his thoughts are their thoughts, all

that He loveth they love, all that He hateth they hate. And whether they stand still and wait around the throne, or whether, like flames of fire, they run to and fro, obeying his word, his will it is which they accomplish.

3. There shall moreover be no *dulness* and *deadness*, and *stillness*, in that kingdom. Full of incessant activities as this world is, there shall be more in the next. For souls and immortal spirits are ever in motion, and life itself is motion, a *fountain* of activity which never slumbers nor sleeps ! And *death* alone hath no motion in it. Nay, the soul that *lives* to Christ even in this world, for ever feels the stir of the living Spirit within it, and is full of holy work. For thought and heavenly desires, as well as the outward act, is WORK, and if the soul worketh not, in this spiritual guise, the breath hath gone out of it. The soul is become a corpse. But the activity of that blessed world to come is not cumbered with flesh and blood. The eye aches not with seeing, and the limbs are not weary

with doing. They will be, like the fire and the light which you behold ever streaming out of the sun, as swift as thought, and unwearied as the Eternal.

4. There shall be likewise, still, no doubt, differences of rank, and gradations of glory; dominations, and principalities, and powers. But the brightest crowns and highest thrones shall be given to them, who have done and suffered most for Christ! Whilst ALL the just shall be as the light, they that have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. They are most like to Him who hath died for them, and washed them in his blood, and *their* glory, in that heavenly kingdom, shall be next to His glory!

You see, therefore, brethren, that even if we modify somewhat the first assertion, that the *whole* fashion of this world passeth away, yet it does not alter the case, but confirms the mightiness of the change! It is because all is holy and righteous, that

there shall be a king, and laws and obedience, and ranks and dignities. This is true. For as we have seen, they are things eternal; in whose absence the whole frame of the universe, visible and invisible, the world of spirits, and the world of sense and matter, would rush together, and be destroyed. We have seen they are things *beautiful*, and the very essence and life of all that rational beings love or admire. We have seen they are *things blessed*, for peace within or without there cannot be, if they are away. For the *peace* of the saints that passeth all understanding cometh from this very thing, that they are *at one* with the spiritual law. And so the tossing and restless misery of the wicked, comes from being *at enmity* with it. "The wicked," saith God, "are like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt! There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked!" But all this shall rest on *new* principles—or rather, what is *here* just intimated of God's ways, shall be complete, carried out

in the kingdom of heaven. What you call now by the same name, are *only shadows* of the real thing. *Holiness and the love of God* will alone exalt, in that realm of light and joy, one being above another. They alone are not subject to death or change ! They alone are precious in the sight of God ! So the apostle and the prophet agree together ! “ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof ! But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever ! ” “ Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath ! for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner, but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished ! Hearken therefore unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not ! ”

Well, then, if it be *holiness*, and the love of him in Christ Jesus, which alone is precious in the sight of God ; if all other distinctions

between man and man, are even at present worthless in his sight, save as a mode of trial and ground of duty, and shall hereafter utterly vanish away; if this alone hath the gift of glory and immortality, and carrieth heaven within itself, all our opinions must be fashioned to this truth. It is undeniable, therefore, that if we are indeed Christ's, and have crucified the world with its affections and lusts, our *esteem and love* for our fellow men must grow from the same root, and depend on their relation to God! We shall love most, and most admire those in whom the love and fear of God is strongest, and in whom is to be discerned the most vivid image and likeness of the Lord that bought us. From the very nature of God and man, it is an *impossibility* that it should be otherwise.

Nay, but think it not a *hard* saying, brethren! for whether hard or not, it is certain. For remember, that upon Christ are fixed the *hopes*, the *thoughts*, the *joys*

and *contemplation* of the Christian! He is indeed still to the world the despised and rejected, and he hath no form or beauty, either in his earthly or glorified condition, that men should desire him. But what of that? to the eye which God hath opened, and the understanding which He hath purified and strengthened, and the heart which He hath exalted to heavenly things, he is the express image of the Holiest and Brightest! He is, therefore, to his saints, not only the way, and the truth, and the life, but is the source and incarnation, bodily and visibly, of all *beauty, and love, and greatness*. We not only turn to Him out of duty; but love of Him attracts us. As He reflects God, because He is his *image*, so do those who love Him *reflect Him*. They recall to us, in their measure, his heavenly graces, as far as they go, visibly and truly! Nay, they are, as He hath told us, many, many times over, one with himself. They are living parts and members of Him who is one with

God, animated by his Spirit, partakers of his fulness, washed in his blood, sharers of his humiliation, companions of his glory. "Saul, Saul!" said He out of heaven, to one who was persecuting his saints, "why persecutest thou *me*? Who art thou, Lord? I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest!" "Love ye one another, as I have loved you! Hereby shall men know that ye are my disciples indeed."

Even in this world, we feel, in small matters, the power over our heart of a similarity of *thought and taste*. We are drawn, we know not how, towards those whose sentiments are as ours! We are repelled more or less, when such agreement is lacking! How much more is it so, in the greatest thing of all,—in that by the side of which, all other objects and thoughts become as nothing, overwhelmed by the vastness of eternity, and the immeasurable worth of souls! We are bought by the same precious blood! We are sanctified by the same Spirit! one Lord,

one faith, one baptism ! And when the world shall be consumed, at the coming of the Just One, we shall be saved together out of that fierce, last, searching fire of judgment ! When one shall be taken, and another left. Over and above the attraction which the faintest likeness of Christ puts forth to the soul, there is no sympathy like this sympathy, no bond like this bond, which knitteth with a gentle and irresistible force all true believers together ! Is he Christ's friend ? then he is mine ! Does he love God ? well, then, I love him too ! Is he a faithful soldier and servant of the Saviour ? he is then my comrade, and is fighting the same good fight ; my heart moves towards him ! A Christian cannot help feeling and saying this of his fellow men ! And the experience of all times and countries shows, beyond a doubt, that every soul which is awakened by the Spirit of God, really *longs and yearns* for the companionship of them, who being servants of the same Master, can aid and comfort

and advise them, in their own journey toward the heavenly Jerusalem.

As they are drawn *to love* them who love their Lord, so hath God provided in this very companionship, and brotherhood of holy and earnest men, a mighty help and constant comfort in our earthly perplexities and trials. I tell you, brethren, the widest, deepest, and most precious of all friendships, is the friendship of them that love God! Well may the world scorn our levity, and question the reality of our faith in Christ, if those whom we most admire are formed upon an earthly fashion! If those whom we most love have not God in all their thoughts, nor any part or portion, either in hope or present possession, of the inheritance of the saints in light! Such things cannot be. We cannot love light and darkness. We cannot serve God and mammon. We cannot hope to dwell with Christ in heaven, while we dwell *of choice* with his enemies on earth. DELIBERATELY to choose those

as the friends of our bosom, whom we dare not hope, save on a bitter repentance, a thing future and utterly uncertain, will be among the number of Christ's flock, is doubly evil. It is not only to choose, as a companion for our journey to heaven, one who is travelling in an *opposite direction*, and who has an interest to draw us astray, though this is rash enough, and very wicked. But it is, besides this, to fix before us a constant monument of sin and alienation from God, which is to them who love Him an unceasing pain and torture.

In fact, so much depends, under God, upon our friends and companions, their line of thought and conversation, and the maxims of life which they profess, that no man who hath the least regard for his soul, will either contract or continue intimacies with worldly and ungodly men ! No man can touch pitch, without being defiled ! No man who hath a love for Mount Zion will fix his tent nigh unto Sodom and Gomorrah ! And even if holy Lot escaped pollution,

amidst the filthy conversation of the wicked, which grieved his soul, yet wife and children, though spared awhile *for his sake*, yet drew in infection from the sin-loaded atmosphere in which they dwelt. Their bodies escaped ! Their souls died, even when the city of refuge from the flame was reached ! Even thus saith God, of the world, that is of ungodly men ; and the separation which it is the duty of all true Christians, who are priests of God, and holy, to make between themselves and the wicked, “ Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing ! Go ye out of the midst of her ! ” saith Isaiah, “ Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” And so in the book of Revelation, touching the saints, and the same mystical Babylon, even the world that lieth in wickedness ; “ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues ! For her sins have

reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities !”

“ But, you may say, we are compelled to have dealings with the world, men careless, or ungodly, sons of mammon or sons of Belial ; and if we would renounce intercourse *with them*, we must then go out of the world !” No doubt we must constantly have dealings with such men. It is God’s will ! But this is *one* thing. To make them our friends and companions, or to encourage them in their sins, is *another* and very different matter.

“ But still men, though they serve not God and love not Christ, have many good and amiable qualities, and they are often our *benefactors* ! Are we not to return good for good ? Are we not to respect and even love them ?” God forbid that I should say otherwise ! Give TO ALL their due. Give its portion of love, whatever it may be, even to the smallest spark of *goodness and virtue*, though not lighted by fire from heaven ! It is *your duty* to do

so ! Admire and respect all that tends, in a greater or less degree, to the benefit of your fellow-men. It is the proper *reward* of *all* exertions for other men's good, though *it be* only for the good of the body, and the things that perish ! Bear a tender and kindly spirit within you in all things, and towards all men ; that spirit that beareth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things ! It is your duty to do so. It is a part of that divine charity which is the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without whom whosoever liveth is counted dead before God ! But still this alters not the question. You must be partners in no man's sins. You must, as far as in you lies, be companions of no ungodly man, no one who loveth not the Lord that bought him. You must keep all things in their right places. And so, while you give praise and honour wherever they are due, your standard of judgment must still be *the word of God*. Your will must be his will ! as a matter of DUTY

as well as inclination and sympathy. Your highest admiration must be reserved for the *holy* and the *good*, and for them alone. Your love must be given, where alone it is due, to "*the saints* that are in the earth," to them that love Christ and *excel in virtue*; to them whom the Lord that bought them hath washed in the same blood as He hath washed you, and who will be your companions in the glory that shall be revealed !

What are riches and power to this ? What are all the abilities and wisdom that ever sought out mysteries from the deep, or governed kings and nations, in comparison of this saving knowledge ? Look on a fellow Christian, the lowest you can imagine, in rags and disease, lying at the rich man's gate, and the dogs licking his sores. Well, so much the earthly eye tells you, and, in the pride of the flesh, you shrink from communion or relationship with the miserable, distressed, and dying beggar ! Aye, but that beggar hath the love of

God within him ! What you see is, in truth, an ANGEL—an angel though in rags. He is dead ! Well, then he is an *angel indeed* ! and is clothed with glory ! and his countenance is as the sun shining in his strength ! Would you claim relationship with him now ? Why ? hath death changed him ? Yes, but only his outward *garb*. The spirit was the same under the clothing of rags as it is *now* in the garment of glory ! It was loved of God *then* as now, and sanctified by the Spirit *then* as now. It therefore deserved your love, O man, *then* as *now* ! Better a thousand times over, a friendship with the *lowest and meanest*, if he be a servant of God and a member of Christ's body, than with the *greatest and richest*, if he be a servant of the world and an enemy of the Lord ! You may join the one in glory ! But if you join the other it must be in woe !

But it may be said, " this matter is not left to our own choice ! God himself hath *given* us fathers and mothers, and brothers

and sisters, and friends and relations ! We found them, so to say, *ready* for us when we came into the world ! Are we to cast them off ? Are we to say, stand away ! we are holier than thou." God forbid ! You are close bound by the ties of flesh and blood to hold them dear, and to pay them the reverence and love which is their due ! " But they do not *love God* ; they do not hope in Christ ; they do not make their souls the first thing ; they do not labour to make their calling and election sure ! What then ?" Why, your duty, my brethren, is quite clear, if so be that God hath opened your eyes, and hath given unto you that blessed hunger and thirst after the righteousness which is of Christ Jesus, to which the souls of them who are very near and dear to you are insensible and dead ! You have a mighty talent given you. You have a most sacred and awful office. You must not permit your own flesh and blood to perish without many an effort to save them from the wrath to come !

Gently, modestly, temperately, lovingly humbly, but *firmly and constantly*, must you endeavour to bring them to Christ, and to save their souls alive ! You must *pray for them*. You must *speak* to them. You must *win* them. You must show forth before them the light of the gospel of Christ, and make them, whether they will or no, to love you, and it for your sake ! They will soon love it for its own sake, and for Christ's.

O wife, you love your husband ; or, husband, you love your wife ! It is a bitter thought that you may be parted for ever. Well, strive with God, move heaven and earth to save the soul alive that thou lovest. It may be that God will give it thee for Christ's sake, and you will live and reign together in heaven ! Woman, thou hast saved thy husband ! Husband ! thou hast saved thy wife !

Parents, do you love your children ? I know you do, you would give your lives for them ! You cannot bear the thought

of that *eternal* parting, one in bliss, one in woe! Well, strive earnestly *with God for your children's sake*, wax not weary in prayer, in holy teaching, in earnestness night and day! It may be that God will hear, and Christ will draw them to himself, and you will join the blessed multitude in the great day with the children whom God hath given you! Father and mother, great is your reward! You have saved your children!

Or perchance you have a dear parent, perhaps on the edge of the grave, who hath no hope, and who knows not Christ! The thought of the everlasting separation is terrible. Well! press the thing of things upon him while you may! let not the blood of the mother who bore you, or the father that begat you, be on your head! Make haste, for the time is short, and the night cometh. It may be God, for Christ's sake, may bless your prayers and holy labour. Great is your reward, O child, thou hast *saved* thy parent! and won a soul from death.

But, if neither parents nor children, nor sisters, nor brothers, nor friends, will listen to your loving admonitions and tender striving, through God's grace, to save them from the wrath to come, what then? why you have saved your *own souls alive*! Grace and mercy in Him that died hath rescued you from the burning! though He hath not given to your prayers the souls of your brethren. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

SERMON X.

LUKE xxiii. 42.—“ And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in *Paradise*.”

HERE is a marvellous thing! A dying criminal, as far as the outward eye could judge, streaming with blood, writhing to and fro with anguish, and mocked and jeered by the multitudes that witness his crucifixion, is spoken to and speaks like a king! Yea, and that not a mere earthly king! For he, at the utmost, can only dispense to them who love Him *visible and perishable* things, gold and silver, a more splendid dress, or a higher seat among their fellows. But this man speaks like a

real heavenly king, who can reach both soul and body, and hath command over both worlds, the world that is, and the world that is to come. This is strange ! So speaketh the carnal mind. But do not wonder, O man, is the reply of faith ! Because *she* looks at Him who thus speaks, not with the dull glazed eyes of the flesh, but with the eagle-glance which pierceth into the heart of the world, and telleth what all things are in their reality ! Do not wonder, for this is the Son of God, the creator of the world and ruler of all things ! The suffering flesh which is hanging on the tree is only the bloody robe which He has put on for sinners, and He boweth himself down to death by his own will for their sakes ! Every pang and groan is a soul's ransom, and every drop of blood the purchase money of a world. He speaks as a king because He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

And surely, when we thus regard Him, there is something very touching and beau-

tiful, and comforting in the words of promise which are almost the last which came from his dying lips! He is indeed a Saviour to the very last. Not an atom is diminished from that fulness of grace and mercy of which his saints partake. Not a single ray is withdrawn, even in the eclipse of death, from that spiritual and heavenly glory in which He had shone among men! And what a change to the dying criminal, in whom the saving power was manifested, did a few short moments produce when the promise was fulfilled! *Now* a bleeding malefactor! *Then* a saint in glory! Now in a world of sin and scorning, and punishment, and amidst waves of tossing and confusion,—*then* in peace and rest, and in the company of blessed and perfected spirits! And Christ himself was revealed to his eyes as faith had already discerned Him! Not with a crown of thorns, but a crown of glory, and reigning as a king in the world of spirits. “Lord, remember me when thou comest

into thy kingdom." "*To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*"

But what is the Paradise whither the soul of the expiring thief was soon to be borne? Clearly a place of joy! The very word itself immediately recalls to our mind the *blissful garden*, eastward in Eden, where the first man dwelt before his fall! A place lightened with gleams from God's countenance, and the visitation of holy angels, and filled with all pure delights, such as became the state of an unfallen child of God! But a Paradise even for *one* redeemed soul must be yet brighter. Thus much is certain, if we had nothing but this one word to tell us so. But this being granted, was it what we mean by *heaven*? Was it the place, wherever it is, in the wide universe, where the full unveiled glory of Almighty God is revealed? Was it where Christ now sitteth at the right hand of God? I should say, *certainly not*. Christ's ascent to this abode of unspeakable glory, and the exaltation of his *WHOLE human*

nature to the throne of his kingdom, did not take place till afterwards. Nor indeed could it. For when He had died upon the cross, and thus suffered the penalty of sin, He was no longer *soul and body*, the entire and perfect man! He had a *soul only*, blissful indeed, and glorious, but thus far with his humanity imperfect, only *half* the being God had made man. But the spotless and sinless body, though laid for a time in the grave, waited not long to be reunited to the soul. It saw not, and could not see, corruption! Therefore, on the third morning, the bands of death were broken! and the prison of the grave rent asunder, and it lived and rose again.

For a short time, the Saviour still tarried upon the earth, giving his last instructions to his disciples, yet, like one become already a *body spiritual*, moving marvelously and mysteriously to and fro. But He was now ripe and ready for his FINAL and great exaltation. The heavens were

eager to receive Him ! His throne was prepared on high. And the harps of the angels were tuned to welcome Him ! Then did He lead captivity captive, the *full and perfect man-God*, and received gifts for men. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." "And while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as you have seen Him go into heaven !" He ascended to heaven, therefore, not before but after his resurrection. It is clear, from hence, that the abode where the separated soul of Christ tarried, between his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead, was not the same sphere wherein from

the day of his ascension He abideth, and reigneth !

And since He took along with Him the soul of the pardoned malefactor, it must have been some appointed world, where the souls of redeemed men, like him departed this life, might be treasured up, as in a garner, in a state of safety, and blessedness !

And, indeed, it was no new thing that Christ should go thither, and dwell there for awhile. For long before had the prophet David, in the spirit, spoken concerning Him, "Thou shalt not leave my soul in HELL;" that is, as the word in the Bible really means, in the unseen place where departed spirits abide for a time. "Neither shalt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption." Indeed, it is hardly possible to have a clearer declaration than this on *several* points; in the first place, of the separation of the soul from the body of the holy One. Secondly, of the one tarrying in the bosom of the earth,

and the other, in the unseen abode of spirits. And thirdly, of the soul being brought from the one, and the flesh rescued from the other, and so reunited into a perfect blissful man again. Nor can there be a doubt, that Saint Paul alludes to this intermediate abode in the place of souls, when he contrasts Christ's descending into the lower parts of the earth, with his ascending far above all heavens, that He might fill all things, although, in his mode of speaking, he uses the old language of the Hebrews, *touching the locality* of this spirit-prison. And to the same temporary dwelling of Christ in the world of disembodied spirits, not yet, either in the fulness of their glory, or the consummation of their final woe, allusion seems to be made in the famous passage of Saint Peter, though we cannot altogether explain its full meaning, "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit, By which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, or under keeping." What-

ever and *wherever* this going might be EX-
ACTLY, it clearly took place after *our Lord's*
death upon the cross. For then, and then
only, though, according to the flesh, dead,
He was still, in soul and spirit, alive !

And, of a surety, it must have been a
joyful and triumphant manifestation. For
thus He who was to bruise the serpent's
head, whose glorious rising the saints
of old had seen from afar, and beheld Him,
by glimpses, and were glad, appeared in
his *own person* to the spirits of the Just,
resting in their bright abiding-place, and
waiting for the day wherein they should be
perfected ! There were all those, who had
from the beginning, died in faith, and the
hope of a better resurrection, through Him
that was to come ! There were Adam, and
Abel, and Abraham, and David, and Sa-
muel, and the inspired company of the
prophets, who had spoken by his inform-
ing Spirit. A mighty, blessed multitude,
it was, whom, by anticipation, his precious
blood had redeemed ! And *now*, when

the cup of wrath had been drunk to the dregs, and the power of death and hell had been conquered by his cross and passion, their abode was illuminated by the shining presence of the Deliverer! What joyous looks, what full, grateful, and exulting hearts must there have been among that saintly multitude, at the presence of their long-expected Lord! And that He appeared among them, not in a fleshly body, but as a *separated* soul, was only a token the more of the perfect humanity which He had taken upon himself! He was like themselves. The LIVING saints beheld his BODY. The departed saints were visited by his Spirit, out of the body! Each saw Him according to their own nature! And if the apostle means, that He likewise preached to the departed spirits of them who had sometime been disobedient, and were shut up, not for glory, but condemnation, there is nothing that should seem strange in this either! To men in the flesh, He had preached himself, as life to

them that in faith received Him, as death to them that rejected Him; knowing, in himself, who each would be, for He knew his own from the beginning. So now, to them that were sealed for glory, and freed from the flesh, He reveals himself, as the blessed object of their faith and hope. To them who had rejected God's word, aforetime, and had chosen to live not by faith, but by sight, He manifests and preaches himself, as He that *would* have delivered them, had they, even in those days of dim type and figure, embraced the primitive promise.

“But, after all, why should the blessed Son of God, when the pains of death were passed, though dissevered from the body, not have been exalted *at once* to God's right hand? why not at once return to the glory which He had before ever the world was made? He might have so done, though, when reunited to the body, He was to ascend VISIBLY before his assembled disciples.” The answer is this! Because being

made like us men in all things, sin only excepted, it was necessary that He should submit to every state and condition to which the nature which He came to redeem, has been made subject. He was perfect man, and yet He could not, and would not have been so, had He, before his final glorification, been exempt from any law of being which God has imposed upon us.

“Be it so. But is there any thing, it may be said, which forbids the *immediate* exaltation of the departed saints to their final and perfected blessedness?” It would seem that there is. It would appear from divers passages in scripture, that to the consummate bliss of any created being, a body is necessary, a *spiritual, incorruptible* body, such as those with which the angels are clothed. Had man not sinned, his body of dust, being unstained by corruption, would, without pain or separation, have been refined and exalted into its angelical condition. As, indeed, has happened to some of the saints, who, like Enoch and Elijah, have

been carried, without dying, into the presence of Almighty God! But sin has changed all this. And the most awful of all the temporal effects of sin, and one which even the redeemed themselves must undergo, is the separation, by force and agony, of the soul from the body. The reunion of them, therefore, is an indispensable condition to our perfection and final blessedness! And so it is, that as Christ has redeemed both *soul and body*, therefore have the saints, from the very beginning until now, groaned for the body's redemption. They have ever, with Saint Paul, longed, not to be *unclothed*, but to be clothed upon, with that house which is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! It was because they saw not how, when the body was dead, the perfect man could be made again, that the *seeming wise* among the heathen denied that men could feel, and think, and do, and suffer in the other world! It was for this reason that they scorned Saint Paul, when he an-

nounced, as the fruits of Christ's own resurrection from the grave, the rising again of all men in their bodies, perfect as before they died. Now till the judgment-day, that reunion of body and soul will not take place. And therefore, till then, the saints cannot enter into their everlasting reward. So spake holy Job, when he looked forward from his day of anguish to the Redeemer's coming ! " I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And, though, after my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh* shall I see God."

Saint Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he has summed up the glorious army of saints and martyrs, tells us expressly that these all *died in faith*, not having received the promises, and looking to a better resurrection ! When our Lord describes the day of judgment, it is after the dead have been raised and sentenced, and not before, that the one departs into everlasting punishment, and the other into

life eternal ! When Saint Paul tells us that this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, it is when the Lord himself shall come, and the trumpet shall sound that this shall happen ! Not till then, will death be conquered. Not till then shall we say, “O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ?” And when, in another glorious passage, he tells us that after we have met Christ in the clouds, we shall ever be with the Lord, it is after that the Lord himself shall have descended from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ! and the dead in Christ shall have risen ! And therefore it is, that, almost universally in the writings of the apostles, they take this for granted, as the time of our glory and entrance into heaven ! And when they look forward to final bliss, it is not the mere departure of the soul from the body into a place of joy. But it is the coming again of Christ Jesus to judge

the world, and raise the bodies of his saints to glory! "Waiting," says the apostle, "for the *coming* of the Lord Jesus." "Afterward they that are Christ's at his *coming*." "Are not ye our rejoicing at the Lord's *coming*? preserved blameless to the *coming of the Lord*." "Be patient, brethren, till the *coming* of the Lord." "That we may not be ashamed before Him at his *coming*."

But if this be so, it is perfectly clear, as I took for granted at first, that, before ever that time shall arrive, our heavenly Father must have provided, somewhere in this unfathomable and manifold universe, a mansion for the spirits of the Just, when they are freed from their earthly prisons, till the day of their final triumph shall arrive! 1. It must be a *place of bliss* then! like that to which the pardoned thief was bound. For we know that the spirits of them that die in Jesus, live with a full and joyous life, and are instantly in a never-ending joy and felicity. 2. It is a

place *of rest*. And certainly, it is no wonder that scripture should emphatically describe it as a scene of peace, and repose, when we think of that warfare to which the saints of God, even in happy outward times, will bear witness! I mean the anxieties, and divers tossings to and fro, and struggles with remaining sin, which prevent in the flesh the full enjoyment of the peace which Christ has purchased! The saints long for rest! So the voice from heaven proclaims it in the Revelation. "I heard a voice from heaven saying; "Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." "Even so! saith the Spirit, for they *rest* from their labours." "There the wicked cease from the troubling," saith the Scripture, "and there the weary are at rest."

Most likely the ministry of angels will be used to convey the spirits of the just, when they leave the body, to their new abodes. For we are told, that, when Lazarus died, angels carried him into Abra-

ham's bosom ! As when we entered this world, we were put under the care of those whose longer acquaintance with it made them capable of protecting and guiding us, so will it be in the world that is to come. We shall enter it ALONE, ignorant of its ways, without experience to guide us, and not knowing whither to go or what to do ! Strangers in a new and wondrous land ! But glorious forms and loving faces shall be ready to receive us ; even the angels who are our brethren, and who, though we heard them not, yet shouted for joy when we were made God's children through Christ Jesus, and were changed from death unto life ! Perhaps the angel to welcome us, and to bear us on his wings, and point out to us the glories and joyous wonders of the new world into which the body's death shall be our birth, will be he who has watched over us, under Christ, from the beginning. For that each soul has such a protector would appear to be fairly infer-

rible from what our Lord says of the angels of his little ones continually beholding the face of our Father which is in heaven !

But if this were all, there would still be a hollow craving in the Christian's heart ! You give us angels, but we want and expect something more ! Where is the Lord ? Where is Christ ? Where is He who has been to us the way and the truth, and the resurrection and the life ? Who hath been made to us justification, and sanctification, and redemption ! Where is He who was our life and joy on earth, in whose faith and love we died, and whose face we hoped to behold in glory, our own merciful and gracious God and Saviour ? Why, brethren, on this point too, scripture is clear and express. In that abode into which, after death, we shall be brought, the soul's great reward and constant bliss will be *the Saviour* ! We shall see Him clearly and gloriously ! Nay, with a bright-

ness in comparison of which the most vivid spiritual joys which visit the heart of the Christian upon earth, shall be no more than the blackest thunder-cloud to the dazzling light of the sun at noon-day. Whether He use the ministry of angels or not, it shall be seen and known that Christ is the real minister and instrument of all joy and salvation to us. "Lord Jesus!" said the martyr Stephen, "*into thy hand I commend my spirit.*" And when he looked up into heaven a little before, the vision which he beheld, and which shot forth such glory into his countenance and strength into his heart, was Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Of a surety, therefore, that which he beheld even when he was in the flesh, and which revealed to him the glory of his Saviour, grew not more dim as soon as he had closed that bodily vision, and had opened the eyes of the spirit. No, no, it only brightened into a greater glory, and having seen through a glass darkly, he saw

face to face, and knew, even as He himself was known. And St. Paul is a witness to the same great and blessed truth. For he speaks in this wise, being filled, so to say, with Christ. "So now also," he says, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And then he goes on to describe the struggle of feelings within him, between his affectionate desire still to be of service to men's souls on earth, and the longing to be at rest and to enter upon his glory! But you will see that it is still the same thought and engrossing feeling, and definite expectation. It is not a loose and idle fancy of some better world, we know not what or with whom, but a blissful existence with Him who was his life and his salvation.

"But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to *depart and to be*

with Christ which is far better!" To be *with Christ*, you see! This is the way in which, as in a single word, he describes the condition into which the separation of the soul from the body would immediately elevate him.

But in that word, and in that *one simple thought*, "to be with Christ," what depths and mysteries of blessedness are contained, even before the final crown shall be given! And he who has been delivered from the flesh and died in Jesus, can alone tell its meaning. Doubtless to dwell more upon and see more into the redemption which he has wrought for us, and the working of God's eternal counsels for our deliverance through his blood, will be one main delight of the spirits in that their place of rest. And thus it was when Moses and Elias came forth from their place of joy, and were seen talking with Christ when He was transfigured upon the mount! This was the subject on which they conversed. It was his *death*, that

marvel of all marvels, which He was then about to accomplish at Jerusalem ! So that you have here a practical proof of what it is which the spirits of just men made perfect delight to dwell upon ! They are the very same themes which occupy them upon earth, and which employ the mighty thoughts and heavenly contemplations of angels and archangels. “Of which salvation,” says St. Peter, “the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you ; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow ; which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. *Which things the angels desire to look into.*”

Let us now sum up, then, what we have said on this interesting point ! It is per-

fectly clear that the souls of God's saints, when they die, do not at once enter into that eternal inheritance, that third and highest heaven, which, at the resurrection of the body, and the final triumph over death and hell, is in reserve for them. But it is evident likewise, by the most certain testimonies of scripture, that the dwelling place which God hath prepared for them is full of light and joy and blessedness! That therein is nothing that defileth,¹ but only the company of the saints! That it is an abode of rest and peace! No storm there, no, not so much as a wave! And that, above all, there are such communications of Christ to them that dwell therein, that He is the great centre and joy of it; and the departure of the saints into this their intermediate abode, is emphatically being with Him!

And if these things be so, and if future life and future bliss be thus, in all its stages, intermediate and final, inseparably

connected with Him, so that apart from Him they have no existence at all; how ought we to struggle to make sure our portion and eternal inheritance in Him? Out of Him we are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked! In Him all things are ours, things present, and things to come, life and heaven and all the bliss which are contained therein! In Him is light and glory! Out of Him is darkness and ruin, and the worm that never dies, and the flame that never shall be quenched! And though he be now in his glory, angels and principalities and powers being made subject to Him, yet we must come to Him as though He were yet hanging upon the cross. The most glorious title of Christ glorified, is Christ *crucified*! And so, being crucified along with Him, and nailing upon the cross the sins that are within us, let us be made partakers of his death, that so, at last, we may be made partakers of his resurrection. "Lord, remember me when thou

comest unto thy kingdom." "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Amen. Lord, so be it!

SERMON XI.

ACTS xvii. 31.—“Because He hath appointed a day in the which He shall judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained. Whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead.”

THIS is the reason given by St. Paul why Almighty God had sent forth his messengers, proclaiming the gospel from one end of the world to the other, and commanding men every where to repent ; and awful and sufficient reason we must confess it to be. Because a judgment had been ordained, solemn, searching, and unchangeable. A day, too, had been appointed on which to hold it, deeply con-

cealed within the purposes of the Eternal, and of whose coming knoweth no man ! And shortly come it will, as surely as God is God, truthful and unchanging ; come overwhelmingly and suddenly as a thief in the night !

It was not, however, that this was utterly new to men, for conscience and the thoughts of the natural heart, for ever accusing or excusing one another, had, from the very first creation, foretold, dimly in its circumstances, yet surely and terribly in the thing itself, the certainty of a reckoning to come ! The heart, of course, in its natural darkness, knew not *when*, knew not *how*, and knew not *where* the judgment which God had thus concealed would be ? But *in all* heathen nations you find how deeply-rooted and awful was the conviction of it ! And how fearful they thought the retribution would be in the fire and chains and darkness, and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, with which men garnished in their fables the

kingdom of departed souls ! But though the apostle's announcement was not new in this respect, in another it was ! The *seat* of the judge, the terrible throne round which should be gathered the multitude of souls, was no longer vacant and unoccupied. The clouds and darkness that were round about it were now withdrawn. And men looked up, and lo ! One sat upon it, and his countenance was like the lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And there was a rainbow round about his head, and under his feet were death and hell, and heaven and earth trembled and passed away at the look of Him ! He that sits thereon is the Son of God and the Son of man,—JESUS, once the Saviour and now the Judge.

Here was a vast discovery, a making of all things new in this most awful matter ! Henceforth in that judgment everything was clear, distinct, and intelligible. Men knew what to think, and what to do, what to expect, and to whom to look ! As

God bade his messengers proclaim to the cities of Judah, *behold your God!* so now, a trumpet-blast went forth to the world's end, and it said, O men, behold *your Judge!* He cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see Him!

Another thing was likewise new! Along with the final appointment of the judge, came the very laws and rules of the Judgment! In ancient days, the law written upon the tablets of the heart was sufficient; even the natural law by which the darkest, wildest, heathen and savage shall be sentenced! But more was now required! The heart-searcher had brought along with Him a law like the very fire itself, penetrating, consuming, and dividing, like a sword, the very hearts and reins, even the word and power of the Spirit of God! Yea, the rule of judgment was *now* proclaimed, even the everlasting gospel! It was no more to be simply, O man! hast thou stolen? O man! hast thou murdered? Hast thou

committed adultery? But, have thy secret thoughts *coveted*? has thy soul, *within* thee, been wrathful? has thy inward heart been polluted? O man! hast thou been *pure* in heart? hast thou been meek like Jesus? hast thou been merciful? hast thou been a peace-maker? hast thou hungered and thirsted after righteousness? Hast thou loved the Lord that bought thee? Hast thou loved the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself? Well might men, therefore, be called upon to repent, seeing that not only was the Judge ordained, but before them, out of his own mouth, was now laid the nature of that *terrible inquisition*. Nay, they heard the very questionings which each would have to answer for thereat!

But again,—there had been another difficulty, in ancient times, in men's minds which had prevented them from grasping firmly and distinctly the notion of the judgment to come. So long, that is, as

men are alive, and made up of bodies and souls,—the flesh and reasonable spirit which compose *a man*,—the *invisible soul* acts along with the body, and makes it, in all things, the instrument of its will. The body is the soul's *visible minister* and expression. And being, therefore, accustomed to unite the two, in our thoughts, a spirit, without its ancient house and fleshly garments, seems to us to lack substance and reality. It is, or seems to be, a mere faint and thin shadow, incapable in the same degree as before of acting and suffering ! Besides men, acute at finding objections, would say this touching the judgment to come ; “ How can a naked spirit *remember*, or *see*, or *hear*, or be like its former self, without its bodily organs ? And, if it be thus incapable of what makes it at present a rational creature, *how* can it possibly be *judged* ? A bare, fleshless, bodiless spirit is so unlike its ancient self, that you might just as well call one man to an account for what another has done, as try

a soul for what is committed in the flesh !
It is *no more a man*, but something else."

Without examining minutely how much truth and how much falsehood there is in this mode of reasoning, it must, I think, be confessed that there *is some* weight in it. Certainly if we knew that, in a month, or a year, from the present time, we should be summoned before the judgment-seat, in these very same bodies which we now wear, unchanged by death, and undissolved, we should find it much easier than we usually do, to put it, as a *real* thing, before our minds ! It would not be at all more difficult than to convince ourselves, on earth, if we were criminals and in prison, that we should be tried for our lives by the judge and the appointed law of our country ! And, in fact, whenever we represent ourselves, as every earnest Christian ought to do, as standing before the throne and hearing the sentence of bliss or woe, we cannot help *imagining* ourselves *in the flesh*, even as we now are ;

with thoughts, and feelings, and all that makes us men, exactly as we are at this moment! Evidently this is not a *fancy*, or a mere feebleness of the human mind, arising from its incapacity to apprehend what is purely spiritual and utterly bodiless, but a *great truth*! For *all this*, as Christ the Judge has proclaimed, *will come* to pass. When the trumpet shall sound, not only shall the spirits of men issue forth from that unseen habitation, wherein they are kept under God's key between death and judgment; but their *bodies* too shall come forth out of the graves wherein they have been laid and crumbled away! And as almighty God breathed the Spirit into the nostrils of the clay which his hands had fashioned, and it stood upon its feet, and became a *living soul*, so shall it be again. As you see the surface of water ruffled by the wind that passes over it, so shall the dust of the earth be troubled and agitated, as the nations of the once dead, but now alive again,

issue forth ! We shall be true, living, breathing men, as we are now, save that our bodies shall be incorruptible. And as in the flesh we have done good or evil, so in *the flesh* shall we be judged ! in the flesh shall we see God !

And if the infidel should say, “ I confess that, when you thus describe the judgment-day, it does rise up before my eyes as a very real thing, and the innermost heart is thrilled by the confession that in this form it *can* comprehend the rendering up an account of the deeds done in the body, yet I still ask for something more. That God hath the power to raise up a dead body I dare not deny, for He is omnipotent, and can do what He will. But I want an instance in which He hath done it.” We answer, O man ! He *hath done it !* He hath given the sign from heaven which you demand ! The prison-house has already been broken open, and a body and soul have escaped from their prison, and been made one man again !

Death has been conquered. And, though it was but *one* who loosed the bonds from off him, yet *in* that *one* *all* have risen ! For man he was, and in him, the second living, soul-quickenng Adam, all the generations of men were contained. And *they* shall all rise, because *that* man hath the fountain of life in himself, and he only restrains for a while the gushing forth of it over the wildernesses of death, till the fulness of the times be come ! As it is, what God has granted to us is enough for faith. The last sign which almighty God will give to his creatures of the wrath and the bliss that are to come *is* given. You will look in vain for any further evidence ! Neither in the heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, will you find any ! Christ, God and man, hath broken the bonds of death ; and that He will be judge God hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath thus raised him from the dead ! *Man shall be judged by man !* by very God, yet by man.

Verily, brethren, great is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh—and crucified and slain—and seen of angels—and received up into heaven, and prepared to come again in his glorious majesty, to judge the quick and the dead!

And that such has been God's *eternal* counsel touching the judgment-day, we know very well. Moreover, very early in his ministry did our blessed Lord declare the same great truth. "The Father," he said, "judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Behold the hour cometh, and now is, when they that are in the graves shall hear the voice of *the Son of man*—observe, *the Son of man*, not Son of God,—and shall come forth." And almost the last words spoken by Him, *before a multitude* of men, and therefore intended, not for the ears of his disciples only, but of all mankind, were a prophecy of the same awful appearing in judgment! You remember that when he stood before the high priest, scourged,

buffeted, and sentenced by those whom He himself shall hereafter sentence, and was asked whether He was the *Son of God*, He replies, "Thou sayest it. Nevertheless, hereafter ye shall see the *Son of man* sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." I wish you to observe *two things* in this. 1st. He is asked, nay, adjured, in the most solemn terms in use among the Jews, whether *he was* the Christ, the Son of the *living God*? His reply is, not "ye shall see the *Son of God*, but the *Son of man* sitting on the right hand of God." Why is this? Surely it is because the Son of God, the Counsellor, the equal of the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, He who was to save his people, could only work out this great salvation, by becoming, not a great and crowned king and conqueror, which would show small sympathy with the tears and sorrows of human nature, but a man of marred countenance, and a grieved heart, in whom all the sor-

rows and tendernesses of a true and real manhood found their natural place. He meant to say, "That Son of the living God of whom your prophets speak I could not be, unless I was the despised and rejected one, whom with ungodly lips you are condemning, and with wicked hands are about to crucify and slay. That *I am this man of sorrows is a proof that I am God*, Immanuel, God with you! And this very same manhood, which ye now tear and despise, shall be exalted in the great and terrible day of the Lord; and death and life shall issue from the very mouth which wicked hands lawlessly smite, a man's mouth now, a man's mouth then. For by a man shall ye be judged."

2ndly. Our Lord declares, what never entered the natural thoughts or speculations of men about the judgment they should undergo; that *all eyes shall behold Him!* That is, that the counsels of God, in regard to this world and them

that dwell therein, would not be satisfied, merely by what one may call a *private* acquittal and condemnation of each man's soul, as he enters the other world, in which all should receive their crown, or their torment, unseen and unwitnessed! On the contrary, that the final tribunal should be conspicuous beyond what would ever have entered into the heart of man to conceive! That not only should all the generations of mankind, from the first to the last, be gathered together as spectators, as well as sharers of the terrible scene, but that glorious angels, and condemned spirits, called from their distant spheres, should all be there. Heaven, earth, hell, God, man, innumerable spirits! triumph and shame, and light and darkness, and glory, and the terrible anguish; and heaven opening, and the world dissolving!. What a day! what a scene! how inconceivable! how overwhelming! In the hour of death, and in the day of

judgment, do thou, O Lord, who art man as well as we, uphold and deliver us !

To penetrate into God's mysteries, or to pretend an acquaintance with all the counsels and reasons of the eternal mind, would be foolish as well as wicked. Yet there are some things, in this manhood of our Judge, which are within our comprehension, and present themselves naturally to the heart of the Christian. They are partly thoughts of comfort, and partly thoughts of awe. It may be considered, for instance, as a proof of God's infinite justice—a divine equity condescending to the measure of infirm creatures ! For it is, surely, a most awful and tremendous thought, to be judged by the infinite and eternal God, the heaven-filling and immeasurable Jehovah ! O Lord, enter not thou into judgment with thy servant ! The very heavens are not clean before thee, O thou most holy ! how can man be so that is but dust and ashes ? These are

but the thoughts and feeling that rise up in every body's heart. They are the voice of nature.

It is a spontaneous feeling, and I will not say that it is a sinful one, that He that dwelleth in the heaven of heavens, eternal and invisible, in the light which no man can approach unto, cannot fully enter into the tone of thought and inevitable infirmities of those who live in houses of clay, and are made out of the dust! We *know* indeed that He is love and mercy, but the distance between heaven and earth is overwhelming. The heart sinks within us, under the burthen of his perfections, and our own unworthiness. Depart from me! for I am a sinful man, O Lord! There is surely within us a natural longing for something infinitely divine indeed, and holy, and blessed; but yet with which we may feel, if it were but possible, a *natural brotherhood*. We crave in our God a touch of flesh and blood, into whose pitying bosom we may,

without reproof, pour our wants and desires, appealing at once to a godly power, and a human sympathy. Certainly, if we are to be tried, and acquitted or condemned, according as it may be, there is comfort and support in the thought that, with all its overwhelming awfulness, and everlasting consequences, it will be by one who knoweth whereof we are made, and remembereth, from his own experience, that we are but dust.

And again,—to other worlds and other beings, it is a mighty manifestation of God's equity, and tender thought for his creatures! "Behold! it may be said by those blessed beings, the marvellous mercy of God! He passeth not the sentence of everlasting woe, in his own eternal Godhead, though He is in himself essential justice, and mercy, and truth. But he does it in the form of one, who, in his great compassion, has died for those whom He condemns! If there cometh on the wicked the destruction both of body and

soul, and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, it is because infinite love, proved beyond a question by incredible condescensions and sufferings, could not save them, without marring the divine perfections !” Who can tell the heinousness of sin, when the Saviour condemns ? who can escape, in his wickedness, when mercy and long-suffering pronounce the sentence ?

You see, dear brethren, what I mean ! Christ is our brother and friend, unspeakably glorious as He is. He hath lived for us, He hath died for us. He hath borne, in a banishment from heaven of thirty weary and painful years, *all* our infirmities, *sin* only excepted. He knows, therefore, what is in man, and hath, in the everlasting gospel, fitted the whole scheme of salvation, marvellously and perfectly, to the wants of fallen and perishing man ! He is the way, and the truth, and the life ; and our justification, and sanctification, and our redemption, and our glory ! What

answer then can be given when to complaints of wrath and severity, if such there be, he shall reply, “Nay, but O sinner, I, God and man, died for you, and showed that I loved you, beyond the measure of the love of man and angels. I warned you, as *the truth* of Him one with whom I am, that the word of God was gone forth, and that everlasting destruction from his presence awaited the impenitent. I bade you, as the *very love* which God is, to come to me ! Come to me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth ! Come unto me, all that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ! I am the way, and the truth, and the life. He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live ; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die. What could I do more than become *man* for you ! and lo ! ye would not come unto me, that ye might have life.” But in reply, you may say, that “you were weak, and *incapable* of *paying the obedience* which the justice of

God requires. “*I knew it!* and therefore I paid the debt for you, even to the uttermost farthing! My blood was the price of your souls! And ye refused to accept the full and free salvation, which I offered to you without money and without price.” And yet, again,—if you say that you accepted the offer, but could not from infirmity follow the example of Him that died for you, and left you an example that you should follow his steps, the answer from the judgment-seat will assuredly be, “I offered to you the Holy Spirit, to *assist* those infirmities of which you complain, and strengthen you for your work. I was ready to pour my graces into your souls, and to make all things new therein, and to give you a new heart, and a right spirit, and ye would not.”

Again,—if it shall be in the heart of the ungodly to say, as our Lord represents them at the last day, “Lord! when saw we thee? and when did we reject thy graces, and despise thy Spirit? thou that art so

great and glorious, and the terrible Judge?" The answer is, "When you were brought to me at holy baptism, and put into my arms, I promised to bless you. And I was verily there by the font side, pitying and loving your childhood, as a human father pitieth his children, though you saw me not. And when the table of the broken body, and the outpoured blood was spread before you, and you were invited to partake of it, it was I that called to you, and bade you taste my goodness, and celebrate the love of Him that died for you, the man Christ Jesus, who died that you might live, and ye would not! And when words out of the holy book were read, that spoke repentance and faith, and the blood that blotteth out sin, and the marvels of God's mercy, it was I that was speaking, though you saw me not. I was there drawing you with the cords of a man, and pleading with you, face to face, out of heaven, in the same loving manhood in which I pleaded with the Jews!

And when the preacher strove with you, and the soul within you relented, and you were well nigh melted to accept the offers of mercy, it was I that was dealing with your spirit, and striving to turn the heart of stone into the heart of flesh,—and you would not! And when you refused to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, and minister, out of your substance, to the salvation of them that lay in the darkness of the shadow of death, it was I whom you rejected. It was I whom you refused to clothe, it was I whom you refused to feed, it was I whom you refused to visit in sickness and in prison. For I am one, in my manhood, with those for whom I died! I am one with my church! Bone of my bone are my saints, flesh of my flesh! I who am God and man! I the Judge was miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and in prison, and ye would not of me! Depart from me, I know ye not, ye that work iniquity!”

Verily God will judge the world in

righteousness by the *man* whom he hath ordained !

Finally, it is an unspeakable consolation to all true believers, that He that hath died for them, and washed them by his blood, and hath made them kings and priests for evermore, shall come *to judge* them. Nay, but He shall *not come to judge them*. It is the world, it is the wicked, it is the unbelievers, and not his saints, whom He cometh *to judge* at that great day of the Lord ! He hath absolved his saints from the judgment and consuming fire of God. And if the Judge hath set them free, and hath clothed them with righteousness, who is he that shall gainsay them, and spoil them of their glory ? It is *God that justifieth*, who is he that condemneth us ? He comes to reward us ! Nay, his reward is in his hand, and his angels shall gather his elect, and bear them in their hands, and they shall join the glorious company, and look on while he taketh the final vengeance, and treadeth out the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God.

The face of Him that sitteth on the throne shall not be NEW to them as to the wicked ; though they have never before, with their fleshly eyes, beheld his glorious countenance, yet it shall be to them, in all its majesty and visible Godhead, as a face which they have seen already,—like that of a *human friend*, a benefactor, whom yet we have never met. Still, we have a dreamy notion of the *face*, and when we behold it, it does not *look strange*. We have lived with Christ by faith, and we have felt the power of his grace ; and if not on the eyes, yet on the soul, the living essential light of his countenance has shone. * And in his holy word we have heard Him, and in prayer we have spoken to Him ; and when two or three have been gathered together in his name, He has been in the midst of us, and in his Church we have met Him, and in his holy sacraments we have, by faith, received Him and fed upon Him !

And now what we *hoped for* is come ;

and what we dreamed of, and tried to imagine, and fed our faith upon, is before us, and life and sin are over; and eternity is begun,—and we are angels, and He is a glorious Saviour, and we behold Him as He is, and He is come to take us with Him into Heaven! Amen.

Thou art the King of glory, O Christ! Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father! When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb! When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers! Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father! We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge!

SERMON XII.

REV. XX. 12.—“ And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

I know not, dear brethren, how this and the many similar descriptions which are to be found in Holy Writ, affect the world at large, but I am sure that to a soul that fears God, they are full of indescribable interest. They have a power in them which goes to the very bottom of the heart and soul, and stirs up everything which is deepest and most solemn therein.

It touches the very *life of our life*, so far as it is inward and spiritual. Such hopes, such fears, alike for oneself and our brethren in the flesh ! Moreover, apart from this natural trembling, the very contemplation of the event which such passages describe, makes the soul seem *larger* than before. It raises it, so to say, clear out of the present time and visible sphere, out of the petty cares, and the manifold degradations which oppress and hedge us in on every side. We stand on the verge of an eternity without end, and joy and sorrow without bounds, and objects and persons so tremendous, that flesh and blood quake at them, for very fear and wonder.

All is infinite. The eye looks out on men no more by twos and threes, but an innumerable host, such as thought never conceived before, multitudes which no man can number, all that have ever lived and died from Adam to the last born of mankind. They stand underneath the great white throne, gathered from the four

ends of heaven, and waving to and fro, while they throng to the judgment-seat, as you see the wind sweep the full fields at the harvest. And it is a *harvest*,—the final *harvest of human kind*. And there are *winds* ; the awful, sweeping blasts of wrath that shall issue from the throne. And what is as terrible, the blasts of *fear*, and *remorse*, and *despair*, which vehemently toss, from *within* themselves, the souls of that vast multitude.

And there is hell below them, and there is heaven above, and there are the hosts of the angels, and the evil spirits ; and aloft and in the midst of all, is a point whither the eyes and hands of all are raised ! On that great white throne is *the Son of man, and the Son of God*, from whose face heaven and earth flee away ! and at whose voice, the whole sphere of earth, and hell, and heaven, are trembling and resounding.

“ I beheld,” says Daniel, “ till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white

as the snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels like burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, ye righteous, who have washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb! for the day of your salvation is come! Tremble, ye wicked, and call on the hills to cover you, for it is the day of the Lamb's vengeance, and there is no escape! "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." "They that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into the everlasting fire."

1st. I saw the dead, says St. John, small and great, stand *before God*. This is the *first* point—we shall stand before God, and we shall SEE God! How vast a change will this one thing produce in us,

and in all things a *revolution* which, dwelling as we now do, half in light, and half in darkness, no words or thoughts can describe in its fulness. It will be the visible revelation of the great God who inhabiteth eternity to *men's eyes and senses*, as we now look upon one another, and the sky above us, and the earth around us ! God, no longer a thought, or a fancy, or a *form of words*, mere *hollowness* without substance ; but *a thing more real* than what we have ever conceived of, in comparison of which those earthly objects which affect us most shall appear mere shadows ! God as a *solid, all-filling presence*, the sense of which shall be irresistible and overwhelming, as vivid and as certain as *our own existence* is to ourselves. Finally, God as a *person* ! not an abstraction, or a great being without love, and anger, and will, but as much a *person* as ourselves—clothed with attributes infinite like his essence. Whilst no space can compass the one, no thought can reach the other ! Love with-

out bounds, justice without bounds, purity without bounds—all of a length, and depth, and breadth, and height, which no fathoming can reach. We shall see a *willing, loving, avenging, living God!*

Nay, this is the very thing, the absence of which renders the existing world what it is, a world of *trial!* For if, at the present instant, the mysteries of the world to come were as evident to men as the gains and the pleasures which their hands touch, and their eyes behold, the coarse palpable enjoyments which they *taste*, there would be little hesitation between the two.

Nay, however strong the wish or decided the choice for things temporal over things eternal, yet the actual *presence* of the tremendous penalty of sinning, close at hand, the sight of the fire kindled and the worm ready to devour, would control the boldest sinner. The very wish to sin would *die* within Him. Or, on the other hand, had we only to lift up our eyes to heaven, to behold God in his glory and

infinite majesty, such as he reveals himself to his saints, the mere glimpse of that eternal and inexhaustible light would ravish the heart with joy! Much more the *full sight and aspect of God!*

And yet, both wicked and just are even now prepared in some sort for this *sight* of their Maker and Redeemer. It will not be altogether new. He is indeed among us *now*, though *veiled*—not altogether hidden, but seen by snatches, as it may be; sometimes more and sometimes less, but ever obscurely and under eclipse. We *see*, says the apostle, at present, but through a glass, *darkly*. The beholding of God upon his throne at the judgment day, therefore, is only a completion of what is already *begun* upon earth. They who have faith, which is the soul's eye, and hath an angel's wing already, and is always wandering beyond the visible world, into its own everlasting home, have frequent and, our present state considered, bright views of Him. They discern his

perfections, and, in his manifold and constant dealings with them and with mankind, they trace, above and below, and on the right hand and on the left, the attributes, and personality, and reality of the mighty God, who worketh, and no man can hinder!

And even they who love and fear Him not, and in whom is no faith beyond that, perhaps, wherewith the very devils themselves believe and tremble, are not without views of Him whose love they reject, and yet whose wrath they dread, and from whose holiness, they shrink, not in humility, but abhorrence. Try as they may, it is not always that they can keep Him out of thought or out of sight! They cannot stifle the *consciousness*,—that deep inward feeling which no words can express,—that *God* is, and acts, and wills, and commands, and punishes, and is not a fable, or a shadow. Nay, it is constantly and inexorably FORCED upon them by the almighty, and all-present Being, from

whose eye and right hand sin would fain escape, if it could.

But, it may be answered, "all this *seeing* of God is only the *discerning* of Him in our minds, and the *feeling* Him in our hearts, whereas we supposed that the *seeing* of the Almighty, of which the text speaks, and the completion of which you fix on the judgment-day, was a beholding with the *bodily* eye, which we understand much better; and with our bodily eyes we see Him not at all at present!"

I reply, that, in the *first* place, *even* the *bodily* eye, in some sense, *sees* at present the infinite and eternal One. The glory of the sun, and moon, and stars, and the innumerable wonders which his hand hath spread over the face of heaven and of earth, enter *into the soul* through the *bodily* senses. And all this is, in very deed and truth, brightness and rays that issue forth from Him. He *himself* is behind them, so to say, and *impenetrable*; but the outgoings and glimpses of Him are dis-

cerned by the eye. You do *begin*, therefore, even thus, to see Him already. But, over and above this, the impression on the eye and on the senses is *only* so far worth, as it brings the thing beheld from the world without into the soul within. It is not *only* with the eye that we behold the face of those whom we love or hate; *that* is a small part of it. It is really *in the heart*, which is stirred within itself by the outward features, or colours, or lines, that we discern them! And so it will be at the judgment-seat!

Though, as I said before, it is indeed true and perfectly certain, that into these very eyes and very senses which we now enjoy shall come the glory, and majesty, and outward person of the Lord of hosts, having strength given* them to endure the sight, yet the great thing is that the *soul* within shall behold Him! The flashing out of the terrible glory will light as much upon the dull insensible earth, as far as *that* goes, as upon us. It is but *faintly*

that we can conceive the manner or degree in which the feeling and knowledge of the divine presence shall penetrate and pierce us, like a consuming fire, *through and through*, on that day !

The understanding shall not only be *convinced*, by drawing one argument from another, but its knowledge shall be immediate, perfect, and overwhelming. No science shall compare to the conviction with which all the attributes and perfections of the Eternal shall fill the thoughts, in an order, and a consummate harmony, such as our reason has never beheld before.

The *feelings* and *affections*, in like manner, shall be filled with his presence, which shall embrace them round, and, in them that love Him, inflame and exalt them by the penetrating consciousness of it, till the whole being shall be pervaded by it. Whether in the wicked, or in the just, the sight of God shall fill the entire man. Heart, and soul, and reason,

and every faculty shall be an eye, and shall see Him who is, and was, and is to be. In this shall lie an infinite bliss, or an infinite woe — light and life — or an all-penetrating, and always consuming fire.

And this brings me to that supreme faculty within us, by which, at that day, and in which, with an especial fulness and clearness, God shall be discerned. *Conscience* shall see Him! Conscience shall acknowledge Him! Conscience shall confess Him! He shall be to it not only as a real living God,—a God of strength, and wisdom, and glory, who filleth all things, and maketh all things, and clotheth them, according to his excellent goodness, with a brightness and a beauty indescribable—but as a holy God, a sin-
abhorring God, a God that discerneth between good and evil, and will terribly punish the guilty—a God of truth, whose word, whether for blessing or for cursing, is like himself, and abideth for evermore!

In this respect will be made to the ungodly the most overwhelming revelation of the Godhead.

In comparison of this, all the other discoveries of that great day, however mighty, will be as nothing! For God's power, and God's wisdom, and God's all-filling presence, are not *very* God himself, though they are marvellous attributes of Him, and portions of his infinite essence. But truth, and justice, and holiness, with which conscience deals, all in one, is the very essence of Him that inhabiteth eternity, and whose name is Holy, and without this He is not what He is; He is not God! And all this justice and holiness, are not only toward his rational creatures *at large*, but to each individual into whom He hath breathed the breath of life, and whose very heart and reins He weigheth continually. If then He is holy, He must abhor evil. If He is just, He must punish wickedness. If He is true, He must keep his promise. He

must therefore be a *Judge*—a decider and discerner between good and evil. He shall scatter from one hand rewards, and from the other punishments! It is proclaimed to all the world—let the heaven and earth hear it,—that God is not only a Creator and Redeemer, but a Judge! “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” says Abraham. “Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful before the Lord,” says the psalmist, “for He cometh to judge the earth. With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.” “And the Lord passed by before Moses,” it is said in Exodus, “and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means spare the guilty!”

It is the terrible rushing in upon the soul of the KNOWLEDGE of this awful attribute, carrying all idle hopes and imagi-

nations away before it, like a flood; it is the sight of the Judge, which, before ever the sentence shall issue from his lips, shall overwhelm the souls of the ungodly! It is this, which, as they rise from their graves, clothed in their miserable and undying bodies, the destined vessels of the eternal wrath, shall fill them with horror and despair. It shall not be the blast of the trumpet, nor the rolling away of the heavens like a scroll, nor the dissolution of the earthly elements, that shall shake them, but the burthen that lies on the soul,—the knowledge of God's *just vengeance*, as the righteous Judge. It is this which shall fill the heaven and earth with weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and shall make the wicked call on the hills to hide them, and the rocks to cover them, because the day of the Lamb's vengeance is come, and his enemies shall not be able to stand! They shall see God—the great and the blessed—and his countenance shall be *intolerable*. With

all its rays of glory, it shall be *insufferable only the more* for that.

Add to vengeance and justice, an infinite calmness, and an everlasting will! Add holiness and purity without end, ministering not to mercy, which is past, but to punishment,—even the banishment for evermore of sin into the darkness which is its proper world! And it is quite clear, that God's most glorious and loving attributes will be but fresh flames to consume and to destroy.

Between heaven and hell there shall be a great gulf fixed; and that gulf shall be the truth and holiness and justice of God! The whole breadth of the Godhead, so to say, shall divide the sinner from light and bliss!

But again, as I have said before of God's power, and wisdom, and holiness, so the full and terrible view which shall thus burst on the soul of his *justice and vengeance*, will but give an awful completion,

to that sight of it which every human soul hath even now ! There will be nothing *new*, save in the completed and eternal exhibition of it, and the agonizing and capacious apprehension of it, to which the faculties of condemned spirits shall then be quickened for evermore.

Nay, brethren, do not deceive yourselves in this matter, for *judgment* is begun already. Whenever deliberate sin is committed, then you hear the voice of the Judge. "Do it not, do it not." Whenever that word of God which we preach unto you, pierceth, with that strange and awful power that it hath, to the very heart and reins, and compels, whether or no, the conviction and confession of sin, there is *the voice of God*, there is the voice of *judgment*. "But no *vengeance* follows," you say. "Often as the voice speaks within us, it comes to nothing, we are none the worse for it, we need not fear ! It fulfils not its threatenings !" Well, then, so much the more certain is the vengeance that *will be*

hereafter. So much the more awful, to any thinking mind, is that unhastening *calmness* of God's justice, which, waiteth from year to year, without disturbance or hurry, still calling to sorrow and repentance, till the destined time shall come.

That which is impetuous and hurried may *change*. But this slow majestic march of the divine vengeance upon sin, which innumerable transgressions cannot provoke to anticipate, by a single instant, the appointed hour of death, and after death the judgment, has something, not encouraging, as blinded sinners seem to think, about it, savouring of indifference to sin and sinners, but unspeakably awful and alarming. What is so calm, and slow, and exempt from human haste, and mutability, *cannot change*. It tells of eternity ! It bespeaks, of a surety, an unrelenting and implacable justice, when the forbearance of mercy shall have been satisfied, and a punishment, whenever it comes, irreversible, utterly without hope, or end ! It is

marked, throughout, by the attributes of the living God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Why, brethren, with the gospel ringing in your ears, from childhood upwards, there is no sin you can name, on which the voice of God within your hearts, doth not pronounce the eternal and unchanging sentence. Have you broken the Lord's day, and given to earthly thoughts or occupations, the holy of the Lord? well, the voice of the Judge hath said, *Remember the Lord's day to keep it holy*. Have sinful words, words of cursing and swearing, come from the lips which God made to praise and bless Him? well, the voice of the Judge hath said, the *Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain!*

Have you not surrendered to God, the bosom sin whatever it may be, but have you cherished it the closer, perhaps, for being required to part with it? why, it needs not the day of judgment to pronounce

the sentence, and declare the guilt. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee! If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee."

Are you bent on serving God and the world together; keeping a cunning middle course between good and evil, the gospel and the ways of the world? Again, ye know the law, "*one thing is needful*," "ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength! This is the first and great commandment."

Are there any among us, who flatter themselves, that names and professions will avail them before Almighty God; and that *other* things will be accepted, as signs of our being in the number of the elect, instead of the image of Christ, written in our hearts, and the holy affections, and godly walk which are the fruit of it?

Again, ye have heard the words, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,

shall enter the kingdom of heaven. But he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven !” “ And the sea gave up the dead that were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man, *according to their works.*” “ And they that have done good, shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire !”

Nor let any man deceive himself, because he has hardened himself, and turned his thoughts away from this voice of the judgment within him, till he walks, in a manner, *undisturbed*, in the imaginations of his own heart, and as full of peace, as if there were neither death nor judgment. Again, I say so much the *worse* for him ; if he enjoys the deceitful peace of sin and self-delusion. For God, if it lasts, hath deserted him, and, ceasing to strive with him, hath sealed him over till the judgment-day. Just as a condemned criminal has sometimes been permitted, to enjoy

himself as he listed, in the interval between the sentence and the punishment; so, when a sinner hath lived out his day of grace, God sometimes leaves him to himself; calm, and peaceful, ripening for the day of destruction!

But, meanwhile, the reckoning of sins ceaseth not. Not for a moment doth the recording hand of God weary of writing down in the roll of condemnation, the ever swelling amount of sins. As his holiness and truth changes not, and his presence in the soul ceaseth not, so his eye sleepeth and slumbereth not, and the memory of the Eternal doth not decay! Remember that he that hath not given his heart to God, is for ever sinning, sinning, sinning! thought, word, and deed, omission and commission, it is all the same; transgressions more in number than the hairs of our head! Who could number up *one* year's sins—say the sins of the past year—in them that forget God? What think you then of ten, twenty, thirty, forty,

seventy years? not *one sin omitted*, and each, by God's eternal law, deserving the sentence of death. Fire cannot burn, nor water wash out the letters of death in these books of God, the books that shall be opened, at the last day, against the sinner. "And the *books were opened*," saith the scripture; and *they shall be opened*. And they shall be written in fire, within and without; they shall be as the scroll of the prophet, filled with lamentation and mourning and woe, and their words shall pass from the register of God into the sinner's heart, and there shall they be engraven for ever.

And this brings me to a concluding remark, touching the book out of which we shall be judged, at the great and terrible day of the Lord. It is recorded of persons, who have been near drowning, that, when recovered, they have said, that, in *an instant*, the whole of their past life was brought up before their eyes; not a portion here and there, but the whole *at once*, at *a stroke*, forty or fifty years together, flash-

ing on the mind. Brethren, brethren, not only will the books of God *never* forget ; but, when it comes to the trial, you will find that your *own heart and conscience* do not really *forget* so much as one sin, so much as one rebuke of God, within you ! All is written down there, whether you perceive it or not. And of this we are sometimes conscious, when long-forgotten things start up on a sudden, and we see that, though we knew it not, there they were lying all the time, at the bottom of the soul ! *The past is not dead, but only sleepeth !*

Conscience is thus God's servant, and, even when you think that she is asleep, she is noting down, year after year, these terrible books ! It is making the sinner's own heart a record of condemnation ; his own soul an *eternal sentence* of death ! Oh ! what an awakening that will be, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the soul, dead in sin while it lived, shall be roused by the stroke of God ! It shall have the dimensions of its thoughts and memory so enlarged, as

to look at long years and all they contain, *in a moment*, as it now looks on a day or hour! What an awakening when the sinful past, and the avenging future shall be joined into the terrible present, and, in the mirror of his own soul, *all* the sins a man hath ever done shall in consuming flashes be reflected back upon him! Now men taste the bitterness of sin, only by *moments*. The vengeance of Almighty God is broken up into single strokes, and conscience torments us for *one* sin at a time. Surely that is painful enough. What will it be, when ten thousand thousand sins are felt at *once*, and their collected bitterness, as from a gathered vintage, is pressed out into a single cup of woe! Verily, in the hand of the Lord, there is a cup, and the wine is red, and the ungodly of the earth shall drink it out to the dregs thereof.

But, saith the Scripture, "another book was opened, which was the book of life." Therein are written down the works and graces of the saints! They too are judged

by their works. But is it for their own worth? Nay, brethren, God forbid! They are precious in God's sight, and they shall be judged and rewarded thereby. But it is because they are signs and fruits of the faith which God hath given to the saints. All their unworthy offerings have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and made exceeding precious for his adorable sake, in the eyes of their heavenly Father.

And now, He that was wrapped in swaddling clothes, sitteth gloriously on his throne; and He that was judged by the wicked, is become the Judge; and He that walked on earth as man, is confessed and worshipped as the eternal God, and cometh to take his chosen into their eternal rest! Verily, we shall see that Scripture saith true. There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, who live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and death is the gate to life, and the judgment-day the day of their crowning and their triumph! O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?

SERMON XIII.

MATT. xxv. 31.—“ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”

THE account which our Lord here gives of the judgment-day is, in many respects, so minute, that it requires a separate examination. Let us stand in thought before the tremendous throne, and prepare for the awful inquisition with a loving and reverent awe. It will enable us, as we proceed, to gather up in one many of the circumstances which we have already viewed apart. Let us view it, as Christ hath laid it before us !

1. Christ being here “ *the Son of man,*” his glory is to be considered as his *reward*.

To recompence his humiliation, Almighty God hath thus decreed to do honour to the Saviour, since He hath not despised the Virgin's womb, and hath taken on Him flesh and blood for our sakes. This is one reason why judgment is committed unto Him; that the height of his exaltation may be proportioned to the depth and darkness of his humiliation. Moreover, not only the assumption of our nature at all, but the shame and degradation which He endured in the flesh, the hunger and thirst, and stripes, and cruel death, require, to counterbalance them, this recompence of reward. *He was a man of sorrows!*

2. But He shall come in great glory as his *right* as well as reward. The pomps which dazzle us on earth, and by the glitter of a little silver and gold, and fine apparel, distinguish the great from the humble attire and unhonoured aspect of the mass of mankind, are very poor and mean in wise men's eyes, even now. Faint

and dim is all the gorgeousness of kings and palaces to the majesty and glory of God's universe! But the sun when He shineth in his strength, so that the eyes of men cannot bear to look steadily upon him, and the stars which you see glittering so brightly above your heads in the heavens, and showing forth the greatness of God, even they shall be nothing in comparison to Christ's glory. All the riches of his heavenly kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty, shall give light round about Him. Nay, more than this, He shall come likewise robed in *his Father's glory*, that it may be seen and known that in Him dwelleth the full Godhead bodily—the *substantial Deity*, tabernacled in the Son!

Not only shall the firmament lend its lustrous and transparent sapphire as at Horeb for a pavement underneath his feet! Not only shall the suns and stars in their courses shoot forth their splendours as He passes by them in his descent! Not only shall light spread its most marvellous

rainbows round his head ! But all that the eyes of creatures can endure shall blaze round Him from the abysses of the triune Godhead ! *It shall flash from one end of heaven to the other !* and the far off worlds shall wonder at the sudden glory that pervades the universe.

3. When Christ comes to judge the world, He will bring all his holy angels with Him. Then shall the saints from earth join the company of the church above, and the ascending and descending multitudes mingle together between earth and heaven ! But I wish you to observe that in God's dispensations, all blessed beings act and work ! The angels are not idle attendants on the flaming chariot of the Messiah ! And in that kingdom above they hasten to and fro fulfilling his word, and ministrant to his will, with hearts and wings unwearied ! So is it at the judgment day ! They have all their offices assigned to them, in a perfect order and symmetry, throughout their manifold

and harmonious hierarchies. They are the Judge's ministers. They will sound aloud the trumpet which shall awaken all the dead out of their graves, and they will lead them to the judgment-seat in their new and undying bodies. They shall gather together the saints from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. They shall bind up the tares when they are ready to be cast into the fire. They shall be witnesses of the glory and exaltation of Christ's redeemed, and shall receive them for ever and ever into their company, on their return to heaven. They shall rejoice over the new creation, as over the old one, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

4. He will then "*sit upon the throne of his glory.*" I do not mean that He does not sit upon a throne at present, high and exalted above all things both in heaven and earth. He does! that is certain. But the difference between the two thrones,

that on which He now sits, and that on which He will then be seated, is this : It is now a seat of mercy, but then it will be the seat of judgment. Yea will it be a glory of all his attributes together, save that of *mediation* which is passed away. There will be a glory of righteous vengeance on his adversaries. There will be a glory of mercy and love to his saints, that love which, in their earthly days, sustained their souls with himself, and numbered up their tears and sighs. Then will boundless love be wed to *inexorable justice*. All the cries of anguish that will come from the wicked in that day, all the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth, will not move him ! Love and justice are alike unchangeable.

5. "*Before Him shall be gathered all nations.*" Whether they are christian or heathen, all the peoples that inhabit the world will be collected together in that multitude,—of all ages from the very beginning of time till this day, and from every corner

of the world, however distant and obscure, they will all appear before Him. “And then,” says our Lord, “He shall *separate* them, the one from the other.” This is peculiarly the work of the great and awful day, for as things now are, we are all mixed together in this world, good and evil, they that fear God, and they that are not for Him; they that serve Him, and they that serve Him not. What a joy for those who, marred in face like their Lord, and with hearts full of woe like Him, as far as earthly joys are concerned, seem utterly lost, one here and one there, among the multitudes of this world! Unseen, and unknown, they are still his. It seems as difficult to extricate the saints from the ungodly masses in which they are mingled, as to pick out from a mountain of sand a scattered gem or two lurking in the worthless earth-heaps, you know not where! But the comfort is, — that in spite of all this, the Lord knoweth them that are his. His eye is ever upon them day and

night, and their names are all written in the book of life. So that though they cannot separate themselves, and though no one else can possibly separate them, yet it becomes very easy for God to do so, whenever the time shall arrive, that it shall be his good pleasure to winnow the chaff from the wheat. Now it *will be* his pleasure so to do, at the great day of judgment. And this separation will be so strict, and so minute the inquisition, that not so much as the humblest and most despised of his saints shall be lost in the crowd, though no human eye has ever so much as glanced upon him at all. Nor will the most skilful hypocrite, he who has looked the fairest, and professed the loudest among men, while his heart all the while was not with God, be hidden any longer. But each shall join their own company, and go unto their own place.

When they are, therefore, thus divided, Christ will set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Christ thus confers the post of honour on the godly,

exactly as we show respect to persons on earth, by putting them on our right hand. The wicked will rise, you see, not only to pain and punishment, but to *shame and everlasting contempt*; the scorn of the assembled universe will then light on *them*—once the scorners. And here it is worth observing on what rule it is that Christ will go, in assigning honour and dishonour. What now is become of nobles and kings, and the great ones of the earth, they who sat on thrones and ruled the people? Where is the wisdom of the wise, and the knowledge of the learned? Vanished and gone for evermore, like as a dream, when one awaketh! Christ knows but *two classes* now, the godly upon his right hand, and the ungodly upon his left. So that, by a law as fixed and unchanged as God's eternity, all differences and distinctions whatsoever, will be abolished, excepting this one of godliness and ungodliness. The great distinction of men into saints and sinners, now become the *blessed* and the *accursed*, will remain for ever and

ever. Yea, as long as there shall be any God, there will be heaven and hell; the good and the wicked dwelling, each along with their fellows, in the one or the other of those habitations, the sphere of light or of darkness.

6. This being done, the cause of the righteous will be first concluded. They indeed, as St. Paul tells us, shall be raised first, because they are the objects of Christ's love; and He thinks of them first. They shall be lifted aloft in the hands of the angels, and join the Lord in the air. There the saints of God shall stand by, and hear the sentence pronounced upon the wicked, and witness the punishment inflicted upon them. So that the latter will have the sense of their own misery ineffably increased by beholding them who have served God clad in their garments of glory, along with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, while they themselves are cast out into the outward darkness. The righteous, therefore, shall not only be safe

from the flames which shall dissolve the elements, but be exalted to the post next the King. And no doubt, at the very moment that they rise, their hearts shall be filled with a sense of unspeakable joy, which shall not only banish the smallest remains of fear and doubt, but be a triumphant assurance that the hour of their glory and everlasting blessedness is finally come. Our Lord says, "*The King shall say unto them,*"—no longer the despised and rejected of men, no longer even the kind and gentle shepherd only, watching over his sheep and lambs, *but a King*. Yet no more a king, such as He came to Jerusalem, meek and lowly. No more even as the King *mediatorial*, reigning unseen in the heaven of heavens, but with his reward in his hand, and calling to his own. "Come, then," He will say, "ye blessed children of my Father." Every word here is precious,—"*blessed ;*" with all joy assured to you from henceforth and for ever ; no pain, no tears, no sorrow, no mingled world of many cares, and few joys

that deserve the name, but partners of all the glories and delights which reside in the fulness of God, and flow out of his throne for ever and ever. “Blessed of my Father; despised or little thought of by the world. Perhaps the objects of hatred and of persecution for my sake and the gospel’s, called by hard names, your very good turned into evil, and with no human hearts, it may be, to feel for you, and to comfort you; but yet the blessed of Almighty God, Come—come, that is, into the full enjoyment of your Father’s love! Come to me, ye, whom I have bought with my blood, and sanctified with my Spirit, and trained up, through many tribulations, that you might share my glory. Come ye, who have prayed to me, and trusted in me, and lived *to* me, and lived *in* me, and see, and feel, and taste, what a Saviour and a God you have won in me. Come ye, who have carried my cross, and had your brows rent by the wearing of the thorns, and now *wear my crown*,—welcome to heaven, to bliss, to

the company of angels and of archangels, and the presence of your Lord and Saviour.

You shall be like me, for you shall henceforth see me as I am."

Do you not think, dear brethren, that this burthen, and unutterable excess of glory will counterbalance the pains which we have endured on earth, for Christ's sake, and all the poor sacrifices which we may have made, in order to show our love to Him, and our faith upon Him, and the earnest desire of our soul to be for ever with Him! The apostle bids us now to come boldly to the *throne of his grace*—and we come. How joyfully and confidently shall we then come to *the throne of his glory*, when that divine voice itself invites us, and our Lord himself takes us by the hand! The Spirit, even at present, says, "*come*"—and the Bride says, "*come*"—nay, the heart and voice of the saints in the church universal throughout all ages send up the same prayer, "Hasten the deliverance of thy chosen! come, Lord Jesus."

Oh joyful invitation ! “ Come to glory ; come, ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

It is, therefore, *prepared*, not the result of chance or accident, but made ready *expressly* for the saints’ habitation. Yea, it is all adorned and shining for them with everything that is best adapted to display God’s love and power, and best fitted for their joy and happiness. Unspeakable love hath consulted, so to say, with illimitable power, in infinite space and infinite time, how to heap joys and glories on the saints ! When He that inhabiteth eternity studies how to delight us, and cover us over with glory, and fill our inmost being with blissfulness, what perfection of joy must be the result of it ! How unspeakably glorious, dear brethren, our future home in heaven must be ! “ *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it so much as entered into the heart of man*

to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

It is not only prepared, and built, and garnished, and set in perfect order for us, from the foundation of the world, but it *now becomes our right*. "*Inherit it.*" It is yours—not indeed by your own right therein—but by God's grace and infinite mercy toward you—still it is yours in full right, and entire possession and enjoyment. It is for no small thing that you are children of God and brothers of Christ your Saviour! It is for no small thing that you have been redeemed, and called, and sanctified, and made sons of God by adoption and grace. It is for no small thing that you have been drawn by the Spirit to the throne of grace and mercy; that instead of hatred, and fear, and alienation, love and peace have been put into your hearts, and you have been enabled, even in the world, to look up to heaven for your joy and comfort, and say, "Abba! Abba! Father! Our Father which art in hea-

ven." "If you are children, you are heirs—heirs by the right which I have purchased for you—heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ your Lord and Saviour. God does not upbraid you with his blessings. You are his children ; and therefore, in the order of nature, you must share in your Father's house, and sit at your Father's table, and enjoy the light of your Father's countenance. It was only to try you that you had it not long and long ago. But you were not ready for it then ; you were not ripe, in capacity, for its joys. You were under training and discipline for it. I told you *then* that I would reward you for all you did for me. I told you *then*, that my ways were ways of pleasantness, and that all my paths were peace. I told you *then*, that I had laid up an unspeakable reward for all those that loved me. And now your own hearts feel, and your own ears hear, and your own eyes see, that I am a great deal better than my word, and

that the inheritance is far more glorious than you could ever think or dream of. *Come, therefore, and enjoy it."*

After this, dear brethren, is given the ground and reason of it all, which I do entreat you to lay to heart, because all that our Lord here says will, beyond a question, be the *rule* by which we shall be judged. I will only make one remark before I give you our Lord's words; that we are not to suppose that our works have any excellency in them properly and of themselves. Of a surety we shall be judged by our works, not as so many merits, but as the only signs and proofs which can possibly be given by us of the sincerity of our faith and love,—“*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” It is plain that, under the covenant which he has concluded with us, almighty God *will* graciously accept every act of service which we can render to Him. Nay, He will reward every offering of our love which we can tender to Him, though we be, even the best of us,

very poor and unprofitable servants. And the good works which are mentioned by our Lord, are such as are termed *charitable* works—works, emphatically of love, the outward beams of that heavenly charity which is the bond of perfectness. Not but that many shall be found at Christ's right hand who never were in a capacity to feed the hungry, or to clothe the naked, but were themselves the objects of the charity of others. Still one act of obedience is put for all; and the real lesson which it teaches us is, that faith working by love is all in all in the sight of God. “*Show me thy faith by thy works.*” And those marks of love for the good of others, which may be shown by all disciples of Christ—tender and charitable affections, and a thousand little ministrations to their wants,—whether they have money to give or not, are the best proof of the fruits of the Spirit.

And I hope you will remark and remember to the end of your lives, that two things are absolutely necessary in such

real works of love as Christ Jesus will reward at the judgment-day.

1. That *there must be self-denial in them*—that they really cost us such pain and trouble, and such control over ourselves as a person will submit to, in order to win God's love, and show the reality of his faith, *but not without*. Merely to give what we do not want ourselves, and make a pretence of doing a great thing in bestowing what it costs us nothing at all to spare, and of the absence of which we are not sensible, is of no value in the eyes of God. Nor, if the truth must be told, *does it deserve to be*. To say, therefore, “*No, I cannot give, for if I do, I must give up this vanity, and I shall not be able to enjoy that pleasure, and I shall lose such and such gain which I should otherwise be able to secure; go and ask the rich,*” is the greatest affront to God which you can possibly offer. It is the greatest self-condemnation which you can possibly pass upon yourselves. Do you not think that

almighty God is perfectly aware of this when He asks you? This is the very thing which he wishes you to do—that you *should suffer something* for Him; that you *should give up something for his sake*; that *you should feel* the lack of what you bestow. After all, who is it that gives you what you have? is it not God? is not He able to reward you, and make it up to you? Is not his love better than the vanity, or the gain, or whatever else it may be which you may prefer to doing an act of love in order to please Him? If you think otherwise, you may be assured of it, that you will lose your souls, for those alone are fit for heaven who are self-renouncing and mortified upon earth.

2ndly. Love to our brethren, if it is worth anything, must spring from a believing regard to Jesus Christ. That which Christ will reward hereafter, when He comes in his glory and with his holy angels, are deeds of love and holy charity, which are *done for the Lord's sake*, for the

love of Him, and with an eye to his approbation, *and only these*. For this is the only true foundation of acts of charity to our brethren, *because we are Christ's, and they are Christ's, and we must love them, because He has loved us, and told us to love and cherish our brethren for his sake*.

Observe then, our Lord says to the blessed of his Father, "*I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.*" Well, those for whom he entreats you,* this day are an hungered; they are your fellow-men, bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. They are your countrymen, under the same laws and with the same rights with yourselves; they are your brethren in Christ Jesus, washed with the same baptism, justified by the same faith, relying on the same Saviour, children of the same God. If these are not irresistible claims upon us, I know not what are. And while we, taking us altogether, have homes to shelter us, and bread to nourish us; and while even those among us, who are

* The famishing Irish.

poorest and worst off in worldly goods, have yet kind friends and neighbours to succour, and support, and keep the life within them, these, your unhappy brethren, have neither the one nor the other. I do not mean that those who are better off among their own neighbours do not contribute all they can for their relief. I believe that they do. But the distress is so excessive, and the numbers who are literally famishing so great, that nothing which *can* be done upon the spot is anything like equal to afford competent relief. They come therefore, *and justly come*, to us for succour. I am sure too that they need not be ashamed so to do. *For they do it not in their own name, but in Christ's.* They do not ask for what they have no right to claim, but what Christ, for their sakes, has put into our hands, and which he commands us to give. We are Christ's *stewards*, and I am bold to say that, even if we cannot extend the aid which is needful to them, without

pinching ourselves, yet, so long as we have bread to eat, and refuse to share it with our brethren, we shall have to answer for our lack of common humanity and christian love, little as we may think of it now, at the judgment-day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. “*I was hungry,*” says our Lord, “*and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was in prison, and ye visited me.*”

The hosts of the blessed are represented as replying, as though they understood not how they could have benefited their gracious Lord, and glorious Saviour. They are not filled with a proud and boasting recollection of the deeds of love which they have done, as though they had wrought some great thing, as you see men frequently congratulate themselves on some poor single act of charity. They do not say, Well, this is what we have deserved, for we have done many good deeds! But they are filled with a boundless admiration, to find that

such scanty and worthless services as they have rendered, should be so highly praised and so richly rewarded. "Lord," they exclaim, "when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee, or when saw we thee sick and in prison, and visited thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, "*Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*"

These are words, again, which ought to be engraven on the heart of every one of us—of every one, that is, who hopes to see the Lord in his glory. Tell me, brethren, if your Saviour wore flesh and blood, and were hungry, would you not give Him to eat, though, to do it, you divided the last loaf which you had? If He who bought you with his blood were athirst, would you not hasten to keep up within Him the expiring life; with a cup of cold water, if

it was all you had to give, and with the most precious cordial in the world, if you had it to bestow? Would you not hurry with your own feet to relieve Him, and, with your own hand, refresh his parched lips with the draught? If He who disrobed himself of his garments of glory, in order that He might clothe us sinners with his righteousness, were naked, would you not hasten to cover Him? with the richest and warmest garments, if you had them; and if not, by sharing with Him anything, however poor and mean, which God had left *you* to cover yourselves withal; *clothe Him and shelter Him at any rate?* If He who came to rescue you from the chains of sin and Satan, were in prison, would you not, at any risk, or trouble, or pain, visit Him in his shame and deprivation, and minister to his wants? I know what rich and poor, and young and old, would say to the question. I know what all of you would reply. "How can you doubt it?" you would cry out of course, "We

would feed and clothe, and visit and cherish Him, who has done such great things for us. Feed, and clothe, and cherish, did you say? Nay, that is a small thing to do for Him, who has died that we may live. We would give Him, if it would do Him any service, our very hearts and souls; we would lay down our lives for his sake." I would fain believe you, brethren, all of you; and many of you I am sure would do so; but if so, *here is the proof of it. Here is Christ naked*, clothe Him therefore. *He is hungry*, give Him to eat. *He is thirsty*, give Him to drink. *He is in prison*, come and visit Him; "*inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren*," says our Lord, "*ye have done it unto me*." But if you say, "Aye, but this is not what we meant. We would do it *to Christ*, but we never promised to put ourselves to trouble or expence, or self-sacrifice, for people at a distance, men, and women, and children indeed, like ourselves, and dying of hunger, for aught that we can tell, but still who

are nothing to us. We have enough to do to provide for ourselves and families, and our own neighbours. *Show us Christ, and it would be a different thing altogether.*" Would it do you suppose? so will think the wicked at the day of judgment. Now this is the *very way*, almost word for word, in which they will excuse themselves: "*Lord! when saw we thee an hungry or athirst, or naked, or in prison; and refused to feed, or clothe, or cherish, or visit thee?*" Then shall He answer them, saying, "*Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.* And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

O Lord God, who didst make man after thine own image, and didst send on earth thy blessed Son Jesus Christ, that, being reconciled by his blood, and purified by his Spirit, we might recover that blessed likeness, which we had lost by sinning;

give to us that new heart, and renew our souls within us. But, specially, give us that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtue. That loving thee, O heavenly Father, above all things, and our brethren in thee, we may show forth thy glory, who sendest thy rain on the evil and the good, and makest thy sun to shine upon the just and on the unjust. So may we be forgiven, as we forgive, be loved as we love, and be saved as we rejoice to save: when thy blessed Son shall come again in his power, and great majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead! Grant this, O heavenly Father, for his name's sake. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

1 COR. vi. 1—3.—“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? *Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*”

THE Corinthians, of whose jealousies and turbulence we hear so much in the epistles of Saint Paul, did not confine their disputes to themselves, or refer them to the Church, but carried them before the heathen judges, for their decision. However simple the cases might be, and however easily settled by any impartial man of sense and moderation, it mattered not!

They chose to expose the gospel to contempt by this wanton exhibition, before the heathen, of the bitter wrath of them who were bound to love one another, rather than yield a particle of their rights, or forego the chances of revenge. Of course the cause of Christ suffered, and the world lost the benefit of a holy example.

It is for this evil temper that the apostle rebukes them. He presses them to refer their disputes to arbitration among *themselves*, and not thus do dishonour to the church, and to Christ its head! And certain it is both then and now-a-days, that these fierce disputes are usually more the result of men's evil tempers, and selfish passions, than of any real doubt or difficulty in the matters themselves. It does not demand so much a strong and sagacious head to settle them, as a moderate temper, good principles, and an honest, upright heart! Society would be peaceable enough if men would only abide by so simple and rational a tribunal!

And that is St. Paul's meaning when he tells the Corinthians to set *those* to judge, not who were most, but who were *least esteemed* in the Church! As if he had said, "Why make all this confusion and difficulty about a little thing? I tell you that the very lowest, and most unhonoured among you, is judge enough for the purpose, if indeed he be a disciple of Christ, and so has the fear of God before his eyes, and the rule of right and wrong marked out to him by the Holy Spirit! Take him, and put a stop to this unholy jangling, and these most worldly jealousies!"

And this shows us in what lay the advantages of Christians over the world then, and indeed now, if they be renewed in the fashion of their minds, and have the law of God written in their hearts! They are not in the condition of the natural man, full of divers lusts, and disordered passions! In consequence their whole mind is not always heaving to and fro, like a troubled sea, till all the faculties of it wax

dim and confused, as the once clear waters of the deep, being tempest-tossed, cast up only mire and dirt. They are renewed, they are illuminated ! They can distinguish light from darkness, and sweet from bitter. And having the will to choose, as well as the clearness of vision to see, they are at harmony with God, and with themselves. Their life and conscience are not at variance ! They are at peace !

Nay, we see every day that not only is the heart purified, but the understanding is strengthened exceedingly by this constant dwelling with the holy law of God, and that contact with the influences of his Spirit, which is the blessed portion of all true Christians ! In any question of simple right and wrong, the spontaneous judgment of a true servant of Christ is to be preferred, infinitely, before that of the keenest and shrewdest man of the world, that ever strengthened his understanding, and whetted his tongue in the warfare and passions of life ! The pure and upright

heart pierces at a glance through idle subtleties, from the meshes of which the mere worldly understanding cannot escape ! It cannot be beaten down by argument, nor dazzled by glittering pretences, nor entrapped in the snares of words ! It has something within it beyond the reach of disputation to shake ! It has the clear and *direct vision of the truth* ! Wrong is revealed, and evil is rebuked before it ! Thus then it is, that all simple-hearted Christians, are, even by reason of that very simpleness, oftentimes the fittest judges of right and wrong.

St. Paul confirms his recommendation by saying that the saints do *actually judge* the world. And there is a sense in which from the beginning till now, the children of God do *judge and condemn* the world, that is, all wicked and impenitent men. They are living, and constant witnesses to God's *holiness*. They testify that He is not a God, who slumbereth and sleepeth on his throne in the heaven of heavens,

caring not for sin or sinners, because He is like unto them ; but of an *absolute holiness*, a brightness of purity above that of the sun, whereby he cannot but abhor all iniquity and what is unlike to himself, the perfect and spotless One ! They testify that He is *just* ! and will assuredly be a consuming fire to all ungodliness and sin ! That He is true, nay, the *very truth*, its fountain and true substance, so that heaven and earth shall sooner vanish away, than one jot or one tittle of his law shall fail ! That He is *loving and merciful*, with a love higher than the clouds, and a mercy beyond fathoming, like the great deep ! That He hath sent his only-begotten and glorious Son into the world, that through Him sinners might be saved, and the lost restored, and the alienated in heart and life become sons by adoption and grace. That He is exceedingly *powerful*, nay, almighty, creating and upholding all things ! That his might is shown not only in that *creating* word, by which he called

all things out of nothing ; but in that *second* and *better word*, the word of redemption, whereby, through faith in the blood of his Son, hearts are changed, and souls are formed afresh in a heavenly image. In short, they are *lights* in the world, and they shine in the midst of darkness, and testify by their godly conversation, which even on earth is in heaven, and by the nameless graces of the Spirit, that the gospel is not a word, or a fable, but a truth, and a power, and the presence of God among men ! They, therefore, *condemn* the world, which does not believe.

2. They prove the impenitent and ungodly to be without excuse. There goeth forth *a voice* out of their quiet godly lives, *silent* as they are ; just as there goeth forth a sound from the stars in their courses. And as the one proclaimeth God's glory, and chargeth them with madness that adore it not, so the other soundeth forth his mercy and love, and passeth a constant and awful condemnation upon the infidel

world, and them that dwell therein ! Thus, then, is the word of the apostle fulfilled, and even *now* the saints *judge*, that is, *condemn* the world, by their faith, and the holy works that testify to it.

So speaks the Scripture of Noah, that preacher of righteousness. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house, by the which *he condemned the world*, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith !" So were the Jews, in like manner, condemned by them that, aforetime, believed the word of God's messengers ! "The men of Nineveh," says our Lord, "shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall *condemn* it ; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah ; and behold a greater than Jonah is here !" "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall *condemn* it. For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of

Solomon ; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here !”

But the apostle goes beyond this. It is a bold and lofty thing, he says, in the subsequent verse. “Do ye not know that we shall *judge angels* ?” What angels ? clearly *evil angels*,—Satan and his hosts ; as he had said before that the saints shall judge the world, that is, *evil men*. For, be they in the flesh, as we are, or without bodies of dust, as are the wicked spirits, the enemies of God make up but one evil and unhappy band. Nay, exactly as good men do, by their example, condemn their sinful brethren, so long and long ago, before these rebel angels were thrust down into their present abode,—a sphere of comparative darkness, — they were reprovèd and condemned by their companions in light and glory, who lost not their original holiness and the image of God. Thus, they *are still* convicted by the saints who are here below, as by the angels above. The Saints’ testimony to the perfections

of their heavenly Father, as manifested in the Gospel, hath as much of the trumpet-tongue of condemnation against Satan, as against the sons of men whom he deceives and murders !

Nay, it may be, that, till the counsels of God were set forth in the gospel of Christ, those reprobate spirits knew not to the full the eternal portion which God had prepared for them, and in which they are linked for evermore, in the abyss of fire and darkness, with the souls of reprobate men. If so, the everlasting Gospel doth, in the lips of them who have proclaimed it, pass *sentence* on angels, not indirectly, but directly ! “ When the Comforter is come,” says our Lord, to inspire and purify his church, “ He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and *of judgment* ! Of sin, because they believe not on me ; of righteousness, because I go unto my Father, and ye see me no more ; of *judgment*, because the *Prince of this world is judged* ! ” He clearly means,

Satan is condemned, who is this world's God, and hath a throne and a mighty power set up in the midst of it against Jehovah and his saints !

But over and above this, there may come a *peculiar* condemnation upon them from Christ's redeemed ; as we have seen there came upon the Jews from those who, in ancient times, had, with less light, confessed Him against whom *they*, a special and chosen people, had rebelled. So here ! The fallen angels, it may be, were created in *strength and glory*. We are formed in weakness, and are, from the first, beset with infirmities. *They* were endowed with power to stand upright *in themselves*. We, save in Christ Jesus, have by nature no power of ourselves to help ourselves ! *They* may have enjoyed, and probably did enjoy, clear and glorious manifestations of their Maker's presence and boundless majesty, and beheld the brightness of his face. To us he is covered round with clouds and darkness, and the dimness of

the natural eye is only brightened by the vision of faith, whereby alone we penetrate within the veil! If, therefore, creatures like us, in the midst of such sins, and dangers, and infirmities, are true and faithful servants to Him who made us, it passes an awful condemnation on those higher and mightier beings who fell from a state of glory, wherein they possessed the power, had they had the will, to abide.

That we can neither think nor do anything of ourselves, but solely through Christ that strengtheneth and upholdeth us, renders not the sentence of condemnation thus pronounced less just or less solemn. Thus then, even in this world, do we *judge angels*.

But, it may still be asked, “is *this* sufficient to satisfy the strength of the apostle’s words? Surely, when we consider that He directs his argument to a real, practical issue, and puts side by side the judgment upon angels with judgment upon the dissensions of the brethren, the *first*

must be as *real* as the latter ; not a condemnation by inference, and morally, but a true sentence ! There is much force in this statement, and it would certainly appear the more natural meaning that, 1st, the *judgment* in question should be pronounced, *in some manner*, from the very lips of the saints ; and, 2ndly, that it should happen at the great and solemn *judgment itself* both on evil men and evil angels. Or, at all events, that, though the word of the apostle has really received an accomplishment in the mode I have already described, it will, like other portions of the Christian scheme long since commenced, receive a mightier and more glorious completion at that awful winding up of the dispensations of God to man !

And if so, the place which the great body of Christ's faithful followers will have in that tremendous session will not be at all affected by the more dazzling glories reserved for the apostles and martyrs. For that such high distinction will

be, and is their lot, is evident from holy writ! Whilst the humblest of Christ's servants condemns evil men and evil angels, a more tremendous commission is entrusted to apostles and prophets. *They* condemn nations. "See," says almighty God to Jeremiah, "I have this day set thee over the *nations* and over the *kingdoms*, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant;" that is, by the proclamation of the word of God! And again, "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to Him will I give *power over the nations*; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in shivers, even as I have received from my Father!"

And it would appear that the souls of the great departed witnesses and disciples of Christ, who have sealed their faith by their death—those bloody *dews* which water best the fields of the church—do, in some mysterious manner, share from

their place of rest the dominion over the world which Christ, as the crowned mediatorial King, has exercised since the day of his ascension His mighty saints are associated with Him! and share his strength and majesty! “And I saw *thrones*,” says St John, “and they sat upon them, and *judgment* was given unto them, and *they lived and reigned* with Christ.” “And I beheld,” says Daniel, “till the *thrones* were cast down,” or rather *erected*, “and the Ancient of days did sit; ten thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him—the *judgment was set*.” And again, says the same prophet, “The Ancient of days came, and *judgment was given unto the saints of the Most High*.” Both these passages refer, *in the first place*, to God’s temporal judgment upon the wickedness of the nations, though their *second and final* completion is at the great day. Just as our Lord describes his future coming to judge the world, in words which

first of all describe his coming to take vengeance upon the sins of Jerusalem, He says of the latter as well as the first, that He *shall come in his glory!*

Nor can it be doubted, I think, that, in this ruling the earth with a rod of iron, by reason of its sins and constant rebellion against Him, the martyrs and apostles are, even now, somehow or other, united with the King of kings! And so, when the awful day itself shall come, when the mediatorial kingdom shall close, and, all enemies being subdued under the feet of Christ, God shall be again all in all, a special exaltation is promised to the apostles. Then Peter said unto Him, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye *also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"

But, it still remaineth that, for *all* the saints of Christ, though they shine not like martyrs and apostles, some great glory and honour is in store at the last day, which the apostle calls *judging men and angels*. Let us see what it is. But, in the first place, it may be objected at once—If the saints *are to judge*, how is that to be reconciled with our Lord's declaration, that both the just and the unjust shall be summoned before Him, and the former as well as the latter be sentenced according to the deeds done in the body. I answer, that in our Lord's account the *just* are summoned *first* to the judgment-seat, and receive their acquittal and inheritance of glory. And St. Paul enables us to understand our Lord's meaning more *distinctly*. "The Lord shall descend with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the *dead in Christ shall rise FIRST*." And then, according to him, when their Lord and Judge shall have blessedly acquitted them, they shall be caught up in the

clouds, and meet the Lord between heaven and earth, where the throne is spread. "*In the AIR,*" says St. Paul! And *then* shall the rest of the quick and of the dead listen to the everlasting sentence.

And so entirely is St. Paul wrapt up in contemplating the unspeakable change, which, in the twinkling of an eye, shall come over all them who have lived and died in Jesus, that, in all that heart-thrilling and most sublime description of the resurrection which you find in the first epistle to the Corinthians, he does not so much as mention the *wicked at all*. He sees the *stars* of heaven—the saints—some brighter and more glorious, some fainter in brilliance! He sees corruption put on incorruption, and this mortal putting on its immortality; and death and the grave swallowed up in victory! But he sees not and mentions not the fate of wicked men and wicked angels! He looks at the resurrection of the just as a *distinct and separate* thing, at least, in point of time.

It is complete in itself. It is evident, therefore, that the saints may share in trying and condemning the wicked, and yet our Lord's statement be perfectly true that they *themselves shall be judged*. There is no contradiction!

But then, if so, *how* shall they condemn them? What is the specific actual part which they shall take in the great assize? Certainly they will not *judge*, in the same *manner* as the Lord himself, in the blaze of his glory, and unapproachable majesty! That would be to trespass, unholy, upon the attributes of the God-Saviour, and to exalt the creatures, washed and glorified by Him, to a level with himself. God alone *can* judge! For, 1st, He hath, alone, the power to penetrate into men's hearts, and weigh thought, and word, and deed, in an unerring balance—the balance of life and death. This attribute is incommunicable.

2ndly. God alone *can pronounce the sentence* which shall follow upon that tre-

mendous inquisition. The same voice which said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" the same voice which says to the graves, "Let forth the captives," and to the dead, "Come ye to the judgment;" the same voice at which, on Mount Sinai, Moses himself did unspeakably quake and tremble, and which shall penetrate at once, at the last day, from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, can alone pronounce the everlasting decree! The voice is that of Jesus, Son of man, and Son of God.

3rdly. Nor shall they *execute* the great condemnation, which shall be left to other ministers of vengeance, or the alone hand of God himself. But they shall ascend, along with their Lord, into the place of glory.

What share then remains for them to take in the great day? Why, 1. They shall be ranged round about their Lord and King, along with the heavenly hosts. Nay, more than that. Since they have

more part in Christ than the angels, they may be nearer to Him, and may perhaps, in the sight of the assembled universe, be shown, by divers signs and emblems of glory, to be *inseparable* from Him. They are *his own*, even on earth, and much more in heaven! He is theirs, even now, but much more then. He is the head of his church, and they very portions of Him; deriving strength, and glory, and the streams of life from out of Him. The Church is the bride, then clad in her spotless robes, and He the bridegroom, come to bear her into heaven! As, therefore, the Lord shall appear upon the judgment-seat, not merely as God and King, but the *Head* of the Church which He hath redeemed by his own blood, and which hath been given to Him as his *own possession*,—so shall the Church, in that her day of triumph, be *a part*, so to say, *of Him*; for without her the Saviour is *not complete*. He shall not only be the Lord, but even, to a certain extent,

the *representative of his saints*. His voice is their voice, his judgment **REALLY** their judgment, in their degree and measure. They shall then pass *judgment*, through Him who is their Head.

2. They shall, therefore, acknowledge the justice of his wonderful ways, alike in mercy as in vengeance, and shall testify by their shouts and hymns of praise their consent in his decrees, and their adoration of his wonderful attributes thus finally manifested.

3. This very presence in their glory, and conspicuous place in that great circle, shall be the completion of that witness which, during their trial, they bore to God's ways, and that constant condemnation of the ungodly which a holy life is for ever passing. They are monuments of his power, of his mercy, of his truthfulness, of his hatred of sin—in one word, of the life-giving and glorious gospel! What greater condemnation of sin can there be than the exaltation of holiness? What greater con-

demnation of infidelity than the visible rewards of faith? What more awful intimation of the divine vengeance on the ungodly than the visible fulfilment of God's glorious promises, and the enthroning of them whom men mocked and despised, in bodies of light and garments of glory? How can the wicked escape when the holy are rewarded? Both depend on the same will and the same word, and if the bliss of the one be certain, equally certain is the everlasting destruction of the other. Many flames will on that day lay hold on the sinner's heart, and many worms will eat out his soul, but there will be none *more* fierce and keen-fanged than the sight of the glory which shall shine round Christ's redeemed! It shall be the sign and seal of their condemnation, and the crown of their misery!

Finally, if these things be so, brethren, what manner of men ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Certainly the gospel loses in us its power of witnessing to God; it utters not the con-

demnation which it is intended to pass both upon the world and Him who is the world's God, if our own lives do not exhibit, at least in some tolerable degree, a real and visible picture of it ! The gospel is not *merely a book*, though it be *the book of life* ! It must be changed into a *power*, and *show itself*, as does our natural life, by the movements and energies, and affections of those within whom it dwells ! A *holy life is the gospel acted* ! A good man is the gospel *breathing* and clothed in flesh. There is no preaching of Christ like that. But if we talk the world's words, and walk in the world's ways, and inwardly nourish the world's thoughts and feelings, we are not *judging the world but God* ! We are not *condemning* wickedness, and Satan who is the author of it, *but Christ and his holiness* ! And where our words and actions and habitual feelings do thus oppose the gospel, not all the professions in the world can atone for the wrong done to our Redeemer, or restore

the balance. We *condemn the* gospel, and the gospel, at the last day, will of a surety *condemn us!*

But what an exaltation this is unto which Christ has raised us! And what an inheritance which He hath gone to make ready for us! And what a portion we have in Him and He in us! Only let us pray for more and more of his grace, that we may, *in all things*, be made like unto Him! That our thoughts may be his thoughts, our ways his ways, and that every rebellious imagination may be brought into entire submission to his perfect and blessed will! If we are one with Him here, we shall be one with Him hereafter; one in our humility, one in our exaltation; one in death, one in judgment; one in glory, one in immortality. To Him, along with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all power, and praise, and dominion, now and evermore! Amen!

SERMON XV.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 9, 10.—“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”

IN this declaration of the universal kingdom of Christ the apostle evidently refers to the prophet Isaiah, that mighty and evangelical teacher who is so full of Him that shall come! Nay, in the very words of the text he has described, many ages before St. Paul, that eternal and unspeakable exaltation of the Messiah which should counterbalance and reward his humiliation in the flesh, (xlv. 21). “There is

no God beside me ; a just God and a Saviour ; there is none beside me." It is God that speaks, God in Christ—God *the Saviour*. In fact, this is our Lord's earthly title, *Jesus*, He who shall save his people from their sins. Nor is there any beside Him, for the apostle tells us in another passage, that there is no salvation in any other. And so says the same divine person in the corresponding passage in the prophet, "Look unto *me*, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth."

And this is the very message which, to the world's end, to all nations and languages, has been proclaimed, "Look to Him who died upon the cross for you, O sinner ! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved, O ye sons of men !" And there is none else, no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved except the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man. So far both prophet and apostle agree.

And then there comes the most awful confirmation that can be of this final and

complete triumph of the Saviour, even the oath of Him who, because He is unable to swear by any one greater, sweareth *by himself*, the eternal, and infinite, and unchangeable. Exactly as Saint Paul tells us, on another occasion, that He did aforetime to Abraham, to confirm and rivet, so to say, unto himself, by iron links, the absolute immutability of his counsel to the heirs of salvation. "I have sworn *by myself*, the word is gone out of my mouth and shall not return." So that again you see that the Lord who saveth us is *very God*, the very living and everlasting Jehovah! For St. Paul says, "*at the name of Jesus* every knee shall bow." Isaiah tells us that *God* says, "*to me* every knee shall bow." Jesus, then, is God, as I said before. "I and my Father are *one*. Before Abraham was, I am." Marvellous harmony of the Spirit, alike in prophet and apostle! "Verily, O Lord and Saviour, it was *by thee* that prophets spake aforetime, as did apostles in after ages!"

Then comes the very declaration which St. Paul makes in the text: "To me *every knee* shall bow, *every tongue* shall swear!" The only difference between the two passages is, that the Spirit, speaking through the apostle, unfolds the full meaning of the phrase, *every knee* and *every tongue*. It might be supposed, at first sight, that it meant only the sons of men, the earth's visible inhabitants! But the apostle extends this homage and prostration of body and soul to the Saviour farther and farther, till it embraces the universe.

It includes all the *hosts of* heaven,—“of things in heaven,” he says.

It includes all the fallen spirits, God's enemies, and man's tempters, whose abodes are figured out in scripture as dwellings of blackness and darkness, the things of the nether abyss, "*under the earth.*" And in regard to men themselves, of course it includes multitudes alike from each of those three spheres of God's creatures. They

shall come and bow to Christ from the place of woe, whither descend, as companions of the evil ones, the spirits of the ungodly. They shall come from heaven, or, at least, that intermediate paradise, the place of blissful rest, whither the souls of the just are carried on the wings of angels into Abraham's bosom. They shall come from the earth which, at the day of judgment, shall have, as now, a generation abiding in the flesh, who shall never *die* as their forefathers did! They shall only be *changed* as they are, their bodies becoming indestructible, without being stripped, like a garment, from off their souls!

And this has led me to the very point of view in which I intend, to-day, to present the coming of the Lord at the last judgment! That is, we must consider it, not only in its relation to ourselves, whose eternal condition it will determine, but to *Christ* himself. It will be the great crowning triumph of the *divine man* who lived

and died for us, and the *actual literal* fulfilment of those descriptions of the Messiah's glory and irresistible power with which the prophets every where *burn*, till their words are on fire with rapturous thoughts! And one thing is quite certain, that this exaltation of Christ, in its fulness, is not *yet* arrived. Or if it be not wholly unaccomplished, yet it is as yet but in portions, partial glories, triumphs, however great, yet only here and there. They are not the great event itself, but only types and faint shadows of it, as it shall be revealed in its fulness and collected glory at the end of the world. Let us examine it.

Has every knee bowed to Him of *things in heaven*? Yea, this has been brought to pass, though not in the sight and hearing of men! Even at the very first, when He took the flesh into the Godhead, and became that mystery of mysteries, perfect God and perfect man, He was not only announced by the multitude of the heavenly host, but, through their shining

hierarchies, *adored* by them. For what saith the scripture? "When he *bringeth in the first-begotten* into the world," first leading Him by the hand, so to say, out of the heavenly glories into the world of sin, where He was to tarry for a while, He saith, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Angels ministered to his fainting strength in the desert. Angels comforted Him when his soul was crushed under the burthen of human sins in the agony of the garden. Angels, in their proper glory, with countenances like lightning, and garments as white as snow, rolled away the stone from the sepulchre. Angels accompanied Him when He ascended into heaven and led captivity captive! Though his disciples' hearts went up with Him, yet their human eyes beheld not what took place after the cloud received Him out of their sight! But, no doubt, they who make heaven resound with songs of rejoicing, when the soul of a single sinner is brought home again; and who had mourned in

heaven for thirty years the departed glories of God's first-born, were all assembled to welcome Him once more in his brightness, with the stains of the grave and the blood of the cross wiped out. Ten thousand thousand harps were strung, ten thousand times ten thousand voices were raised, and the everlasting stars stood still in their courses to see the gates of heaven opened, and the King of glory come in! Nor did they make this acknowledgment to Him only as to a higher and mightier creature, but they made it to Him as their King, and Master, and God! All things in heaven and earth were given to Him as the Man-God! Yea, *all* power was put into his hands, things visible and invisible, *angels*, and *principalities*, and *powers being made subject to Him!* Those exalted and holy beings, therefore, adore Him now and ever, and cast their crowns down to the ground before the throne whereon, at the right hand of the excellent glory, sitteth the only-begotten of the Father! "He

maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire !” And they go to and fro to his saints still militant upon earth, and are ever doing his bidding !

It only remaineth that this adoration and service of the angels should no longer be concealed in those distant, glorious spheres, whither no eye penetrateth at present except the eye of faith. It must be that this bowing of the knee to Him in the heavenly places should be manifested to men, whose brother, in the flesh, He is, and his agony and death in whose behalf, has won for Him this exceeding recompense of reward ! This will be accomplished at the *judgment-day*, when every eye shall see Him as He comes, and every ear hear Him when He calls to the earth and sea to give up the dead ! He will come with *all* his holy angels with Him, as He himself declares. “And Enoch also,” says Saint Jude, “the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold ! the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his

saints !" His holy ones, that is, whom He bringeth along with Him *out of* heaven at that great day, the angels who ever live in the brightness of his presence. For his holy ones on earth will not *join Him* in the air till after He has descended, and his voice has caused the graves to open, and his saints to come forth in their glorious bodies ! Thus far for things in heaven !

Have things *on* earth bowed the knee to Christ ? Certainly, as we have formerly seen, within a few years after his ascension, when he had taken possession of the mediatorial throne, and begun to reign indeed, there was a vast change wrought upon earth. At his command the promised outpouring of the Spirit went forth over the face of the earth as a rushing mighty wind ! The whole kingdom of Satan was shaken, and multitudes of redeemed sinners, whom no man can number, out of every country under heaven, acknowledged as their Lord and Saviour, yea, as the way and the truth and the life of their souls, Him

whom the Jews with wicked hands had crucified and slain ! Soon it came to pass that kings became nursing fathers to his church, and queens its nursing mothers, and well-nigh all the world seemed changed in name and title, into the servants of the cross of Christ ! If we compared this revolution in men's minds with the state of the ancient heathen and infidel times, we might well sing the song in the book of Revelation which celebrates this triumph of the cross. "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth !"

And yet, even in this outward *professing* sense, many wide kingdoms in the world, kingdoms of ancient glory and peopled with busy multitudes, have never confessed or perhaps heard the name of the Saviour, or known the Lord that bought them ! And though, almost from the first, the multitude of believers waxed great beyond the counting, yet far more in number were those that rejected the cross of the Redeemer than those who embraced it to

their soul's salvation ! How small a remnant was there of true believers among God's ancient people, of whom were the promises and the covenants, and from whom Christ came according to the flesh.

Go forth with the holy apostles in their wanderings for the conversion of souls, and count up, if you can, their terrors and persecutions, and the innumerable multitudes unto whom the preaching of the word was not a savour of life unto life, but of *death unto death ! a witness, and not a salvation.* And then go on from age to age, from one generation to another, and you are not christian men, with tender, faithful, loving hearts, if they do not sink within you with shame and sadness, and dread of the wrath of God, as you look at the scorner and the infidel, who have trodden under foot the blood of the covenant. Then there are the rich and powerful, in whom the god of this world hath visibly reigned, and made them great and subtle instruments in opposing the kingdom of light, and laying

deeper and wider the foundations of the kingdom of darkness !

And then add to *these hosts* of the Lord's enemies, those who make a profession, and say and *do* not, who have been indeed washed with the baptismal waters, and called by the blessed name of Him that died, but who are strangers to the baptism of the Spirit, and are in soul *dead*, though they have the name to live. Think of those, how many they are, who, with a strange ingenuity, and an invincible repugnance to the truth, empty the word of God of its power ; who prefer to the heart-piercing and transforming gospel, which is the breath of the living God and the sword of the Spirit, the fond imaginations of their own hearts, and the traditions of men ! Think upon all this, and the many other hindrances and oppositions to the reign of Christ over the hearts and souls of men, which multiply more and more, as we know the world better, and scan men's hearts more keenly ! And then say how we shall

answer the question, "Have all *knees on earth bowed* to Christ, and have all lips confessed Him?" "Few, few," must be the reply. "They are but a small band amidst a host! and the waves of the ungodly seem ready from time to time, to swallow them up in the deep! Yea, deep calls to deep because of the noise of the water-pipes, and He alone preserves them, who saith to the winds and waves, *Peace, be still!*"

And how can it be otherwise, while the world lasteth, and is what it is, and Christ abideth unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! The natural heart hath an unconquerable hatred to the things of the Spirit! It understandeth them not, neither knoweth them! Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it! Broad is the gate, and wide is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.

But still Christ hath a noble company, even according to the inward law of the

Spirit, which requireth that there be a change of soul, and a real surrender of the heart to God, through that moulding, changing spirit. Christ hath, and ever has had on earth, a fair dominion. Yea, faithful servants and gallant soldiers there are, from the glorious company of the apostles, and the noble army of martyrs, to those unseen and unknown servants of God, whom his eye beholdeth in their obscurity and humility, and whom He shall reward at the great day of his coming !

And this is the mark whereby they are known—*they bow the knee to Christ !* That is, with all their heart and soul, they adore and serve Him ! not outwardly only, but with the service of the inward true and very man ! They put no trust in forms, however solemn, or privileges however mighty, but on Him and Him alone, without whom devotion is a lifeless body, hope of salvation a spider's web, and the loudest profession a tinkling cymbal ! *They bow the knee to Christ*, for He is

their Redeemer and their Lord, and with his own right hand and with his holy arm He hath wrought out a full salvation for them ! His blood hath washed them clean, yea, whiter than snow ; and over their nakedness and leprosy, and a feebleness nigh unto death, He hath thrown his robes of righteousness. He hath given them a strength, even a living faith, whereby they may tread the evil one under their feet ! They have *faith in Him*, and joy, and a holy trust in believing ! *They bow the knee to Christ. They obey as well as believe.* His image within them shows itself ever forth in the rays of a holy life, and the heavenliness of charity, and the nameless graces of souls whose life is hid with Christ in God.

And *their lips confess Him !* They are not afraid of man who is but dust and ashes, and who, when he hath killed the body, hath no more that he can do, but of *Him* who filleth heaven and earth ! With their breath they praise his glorious name, with hand and heart they strive for his

glory in the midst of an unbelieving and adulterous generation. And their light shineth before men, and men bless their Father which is in heaven, for the great things that He hath done for his servants !

And so too in that intermediate habitation ! In the place of departed spirits, where, this life ended, the souls of the just repose, peacefully and joyfully, in the hope of their eternal reward, they love and praise Him ! *That too is a temple of God !*

Nay not only those who, having received the glad tidings of salvation, have lived and died in the faith and love of his holy name, worship Him there ; but the saints, *long before*, who never saw, save by the faintest glimpses and glimmerings, the Sun of righteousness. To them, in the place of rest, things not known by them on earth have been revealed, the fulness of Him of whom the prophets did speak, and whose day saints and kings desired to see. And so along with the saints on earth, the true believers throughout the world, they *bow the knee* to Christ.

Nay, as we have seen already, He *Himself* probably announced to them the salvation He had wrought, when, being in all things very man, He went into the abode of spirits,—the paradise into which He took along with Him the dying thief! From his own lips the spirits in prison may have learned the sacrifice He had just wrought, unless, like Moses and Elias, *all* of them, being delivered from the flesh, knew *Him already*, even before by the blood shed on the cross He had completèd the conquest over sin and Satan, *conquering death by dying!* Be this as it may, the saints whom He hath redeemed, be they in the body, or out of the body, *do bow the knee to Him.*

The difference which the day of judgment shall make, is this,—they shall join the multitude of angels, not in their bodies of humiliation, but of glory! They shall no longer be the *FEW*, but the *multitude*, when with the earthly church shall be incorporated the saints, *holy, and bright, and blessed*, whom Christ shall bring with

Him from other worlds. The hosts of the unbelievers, unnumbered millions as they are, shall notwithstanding, when collected together over against God's saints, look like a small, miserable, and trembling flock ! In the presence of the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and their ten thousand times ten thousand, *a terrible despair* shall overwhelm them at the discovery so strange to them, that the *strength*, and the *power*, and the *multitude*, are all on the side of the despised and rejected of men, and the persecuted followers of the Lamb ! Beyond the bounds of their dark habitation, the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth, shall scarce be heard. Nay, it shall be utterly lost and drowned in the hallelujahs of the blessed, and the jubilee which shall fill the circles of the universe.

So shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, " Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." " He must reign till He hath put all things under his feet." " Bring those

mine enemies that would not have me to reign over them, and slay them before me.”

“ Out of his mouth goeth forth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations ! And he shall rule them with a rod of iron ! And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God !” All the *knees of the wicked shall bow down before Him*, and albeit they rejected Him in his love, shall acknowledge Him in his wrath, as the Lamb of God, and King of kings ! O terrible voice of most just judgment, which shall be pronounced upon them, when it shall be said unto them, “ Go, ye cursed, into the fire everlasting, prepared for the devil and his angels.” But so it must be, for God hath said that unto Christ all knees must bow.

And, 3rdly, this brings us to the last point. Have the things *under* the earth bowed down to Him ? In one sense certainly not. Those evil spirits have been, and are his enemies. Night and day do they strive for the destruction of men’s souls, to rob

the precious blood of its power, and frustrate God's eternal counsel !

We know not how many they are, but they are vast multitudes ! *Their name is legion !*

We know not how strong and wise they are. But wise and strong they ARE, with a wisdom and strength such as higher spirits alone can have. For by them, albeit restrained by Almighty God, they drove man from paradise, have maintained in this miserable world of sin more than an equal fight with things holy, and still, by their manifold delusions, disinherit of heaven the souls for whom Christ hath died.

Who they are we know not ! Save that Satan was once, before he was cast down from heaven, one of the brightest and mightiest of the Sons of God ! How art thou fallen from heaven, *O Lucifer, son of the morning !*

But though they fight against Christ, who hath come to destroy Satan's kingdom, they *know Him, who He is, the eternal Son of God !* They know that his glory and tri-

umph is a total overthrow, and rightful vengeance, and unutterable woe to them. "Why art thou come," they said in the Gospel, "*to torment us before our time ?*" Though their unwearied energy for evil tarrieth and wasteth not, as the day approaches, but is quickened by despair, and the evil hope to win more and more sharers in their dungeon of woe, yet the blackness of darkness is already over them. "They are reserved in chains," says the apostle, "under darkness till the judgment of the great day." And so it shall be, for God's eternal counsel shall be fulfilled.

And it shall not merely be, that the great apostate arch-angel shall be smitten, and crushed, even like a potter's vessel, by the hand of Almighty God ! But the sentence upon him shall be passed, and the flaming vengeance, yea, brimstone and fire out of heaven, be heaped upon Him by the *God-man*, in the very form and nature of that unhappy race, whose tempter and destroyer he hath been. Man hath

conquered him—even the second Adam! “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

O brethren! what a Saviour this is to have! who thus comprehendeth, by his mystical union of God and man, all power and might as well as all humility; all vengeance with all love; all fixed unchanging justice, and immutable purpose, with a gentleness and long-suffering truly divine! What a holy awe and unspeakable reverence fills the inmost soul, when we embrace in our thoughts at once, Christ as He was, and Christ as He is, the Judge and the Saviour, the very and eternal God! How the heart swells and thrills when we say to ourselves, “And this is *my Lord*,

my Redeemer ! the Sanctifier that dwelleth within me by his Spirit ! and so knitteeth me to Him by faith, that I am one with Him, and He one with me ! O Lord, if thou wast not infinite love, I should die for fear of thee ! And yet, if thou wast not so awful and glorious, I might not reverence thee enough ! Make me to love thee, O Lord, and fear thee with a gentle and holy fear !”

Finally, at that great day, that day of Christ’s triumph, will shine forth, as at the beginning, the most glorious and inconceivable attribute of the Highest,—the *power of creation !* He made all things at the beginning, visible and invisible, and without Him was not anything made that was made ! Soul and body, man and spirits, al! was the work of his hands,—of the Word who hath become flesh, the eternal Son of God ! So shall it be then ! At his word the bodies of the saints, and of the wicked, shall be made anew,—*unchangeable and incorruptible !* At his

word shall be made, according to his eternal counsel, fitted up for woe and the everlasting torment, the hell which shall receive for evermore the devil and his angels, and them whom they have deceived. At his word, shall spring forth in the abyss the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, out of the ashes of the present elements and the firmament that shall pass away! Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord and God, to the glory of God the Father! "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband! And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God! Amen."

SERMON XVI.

MATT. xxviii. 18.—“ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth ; Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.”

WE can conceive of nothing at once more simple and more comprehensive than these few words. The claim of authority which they contain spans the world. *All power, in heaven and in earth.* We can find nothing more express and clear than the inference ; the sceptre of omnipotence is passed into my hands, and *therefore* go ye !

And these are the words of the Lamb that was slain, of Him that died, and yet liveth evermore ! of Him who, a few short

days before was the despised and rejected of men, who had not where to lay his head, and who hung, *the laughing-stock of evil spirits and evil men*, on the accursed tree. From Calvary to the tomb in the garden, and from the tomb to the more than regal or angelic dominion that compasses all things, visible and invisible, is a step mysterious and wonderful indeed!

Yet such had been the plan conceived by God before the foundations of the earth were laid. Such, however ill-understood, had been the order announced in the declarations of the prophets and inspired teachers of the Jewish Church. It was *necessary* that Christ should *suffer*, and *so*, enter into his glory! In the scheme of the Almighty all the work of redemption, and the rescuing *individually*, as a consequence of it, out of a world in all its generations *corrupt and perishing*, of a peculiar people, the sons of grace and heirs of immortality, was to be wrought out by the hands of the Mediator. Not *only* the un-

utterable sacrifice, and the blood-shedding which was to wash away the sins of the nations, was *his*; but the actual progress and building up a kingdom on this foundation, and by a continual guardianship, the upholding of it to the end of the world! It was his to complete what He had begun, and to exercise the rights which resulted from his atonement, till death should be swallowed up in victory. *All this, was to be the Messiah's office.* God, in short, *save through his adorable Son*, who is the effulgence of his glory and the express image of his person, is *impenetrable* and *unapproachable* by man! He has retired, as it were, into the very inmost *depths* of his infinite and inscrutable essence, and, save from the glimpses of glory that shine from the face of Jesus, *dark waters*, and *blackness*, and *thick clouds of the skies* roll round his throne.

But there is something more even than this. For the providential ordering of events, the exercise of that inalienable and

tremendous sovereignty which, the eyes that never slumber nor sleep, carry over every created thing; the sovereignty of inspection, the sovereignty of regulation and over-ordering, the sovereignty of reward and punishment, *even this*, has, by a solemn charter, been transferred into the hands of Christ, the Mediator and the *King*. And this He holds, not in that He is God, equal with the Father, the very and eternal Deity, but as He is the *Saviour*,—man AND God, *Immanuel*, JEHOVAH *with us*, the unspeakable mystery of God manifest in the flesh! And on the principle, which is universally inculcated in scripture, of God's dealing with man by Him and through Him ALONE, the very existence of his church depends on this arrangement! Without it, it could have had no constant abiding-place, nor wide rule, in this unstable and hostile scene. It was its *indispensable* condition, and in this connexion it is announced in the text. "Behold, all power is given to me, *there-*

fore go ye, and teach all nations. Go, as the ministers of one who is no longer the sport of the wicked, and giveth no longer his cheek to the smiter ; but who is about to ascend the throne that is FIXED in heaven, and will extend over you, wherever you go, the shadow of his everlasting wings. What though the heathen rage against you, and the high places of wickedness take their counsel together ; though the passions of a world that sitteth in darkness, be armed against you, as the ambassadors of light and peace ; let no misgivings shake your heart. *I* wield a power greater than they, and will lay them *prostrate* before you. What though they *persecute* you from city to city, and condemn you to the *cross*, and to the *flame*, for my name's sake, your agonies shall be turned into triumph, for the hearts of men are in my hand, to dispose and to mould them as I will ! Nay, your very DEATH shall be brightened into joy and rapture, by the blessedness to which it shall open the way.

For to them that conquer I open the gates of heaven. Go, for none shall resist you, the servants of Him, who, with his marvellous love for you, and tenderness unspeakable beyond the affection of man, is now *Lord of heaven and of earth!* Go, ye forth *therefore*, for I am with you **ALWAY**, even unto the end of the world!"

And if we turn our thoughts seriously to the subject, even for a moment, it will be evident that no power less than **ALL** power, could have sufficed for the purpose which the Mediator had undertaken to fulfil. Whilst, on the other hand, the assumption, in full, of this regal authority, and his sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, as a preliminary to the outpouring on the world of that gospel, which *as a flood should sweep its corruptions away*, gives a wonderful harmony and a perfect consistency to our conceptions of the divine plan.

And, first, it cannot be too constantly or *precisely* fixed in our minds, that the

gospel of Christ is no plant, native to the soil of the earth. Such are the *difficulties* which accompany its reception alike in the hearts of individuals, and the faith of states, that, *from first to last*, it is, *strictly and literally*, a *supernatural* work, demanding every instant, the interference of divine power. It tends quite as much to sink into nothingness, if these graces be withheld, as does the material world to an utter annihilation, if the everlasting arms were withdrawn from under it.

It was, and is, moreover, a *struggle* ; albeit the agents are, like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, invisible, but by their effects, to the eyes of men. A struggle it is, not with flesh and blood, but those spiritual principalities and powers, whose kingdom upon earth the Redeemer came down from the bosom of the Father to subvert.

It was not, therefore, the devices of a human intellect, or the resources of a mind moving within the limits of mortal facul-

ties, however multiplied or profound, which were called into action to thwart the establishment of the truth ! It is necessary ever to bear in mind that it had, and *has* still, to contend against beings who, however *fallen*, are of a nature superhuman and *angelical*, and, however doomed to chains under darkness, hold a wide range of *present* power ! They are, moreover, engaged in no half-confessed resistance, or hypocritical compromise, or only half-premeditated opposition to the designs and holy will of God, but in an undisguised and avowed rebellion. They contend, as it were, in an *open* field, and with marshalled forces, aye, and at *present*, with more than a balanced success, against the armies of Jehovah. They command a spiritual machinery, so vast and potent for evil, an organization of mischief so perfect, and a world of stratagems so inexhaustible, that the scanty faculties, blinded will, and ill-regulated passions of such beings as men, must, if left to themselves, speedily fall a prey.

All these tremendous instruments of evil, energetic as they had been from the fall of our first parents, were sharpened into *a tenfold edge*, and kindled into *a tenfold intensity of malignity*, by the advent of Him who came to bruise the serpent's head! His *destruction was necessary to crown the triumphs of this infernal warfare*. *The kingdom of Satan could not consist with the kingdom of Christ!* "I saw Satan," said our Lord, "in the swelling of a holy triumph, — I saw *Satan like lightning, fall from heaven!*" "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, thou that didst weaken the nations!"

To put a curb into the mouth of a power so formidable, to temper down its fierceness to a degree compatible with the existence of a kingdom of light; and by a divine wisdom and the depths of a knowledge past finding out, to counterwork the indefatigable devices of our spiritual enemy,

the Head of the Church received in his crown of exaltation and temporary mediatorial kingdom, the required strength. *Over and over again*, but for this, would the spark of heavenly light have been *crushed out* under the heel of ungodliness. In the mighty revolutions of kingdoms, the crashing torrents and whirlpools of temporal empires, the little flock would have been *swept away* among the general wreck of all things! Over and over again, even after the sword had been shivered in the hand of the persecutor, and a false peace rocked the Church into slumber and fatal security, art would have accomplished what violence was too weak to compass! Heretical systems, and the craft of cunningly devised fables, would have made, but for this, the blood of the cross vain, and the gracious purpose of God of none effect.

The point, then, on which I wish to insist, is this; that as in good, so in evil, whether of force or the secret influences of moral and intellectual causes, there is

nothing that comes of chance or accident. There is, in these great revolutions of the world, so far as they tend to evil,—and to *that* of themselves they do generally tend,—a *bad providence* and a prescience of malignity, subtle to corrupt, and *most wise* to destroy; in comprehension vast, and in action indefatigable. And it must infallibly triumph, unless mastered by a greater and holier strength than itself. This strength, *not by figure or unstrict* forms of speech, but *literally and really*, is in the hands of the *Man* CHRIST JESUS,—the Lamb who died to redeem, and who lives a *King*, with power adequate to save.

But to leave these grander scenes and representations of the Mediator's interfering and protecting strength, let us consider what is much more within the comprehension and even *experience* of most of us—the kind and degree of influence and care which every one of us demands to make him endure unto the end, and secure his ultimate entrance into the kingdom of the

saints and of God ! Surely nothing less than a power truly *divine* can break into pieces the stony heart within us, and melt it down into a *heart of flesh*, impressible to the influences of grace, and pliant to that seal of celestial love whose stamp is the earnest, and *the real commencement* of heaven. And then, only think how multiplied are the *means* by which we must be moved ! How various, beyond all calculation, are the instruments of grace ; adjusted, with specific care and exquisite science, so to say, to all the singularities of individual character ! How inexpressibly *complicated* is that web of little incidents, the combination and concentric arrangement of all of which seems necessary to bring out to its final issue, the spiritual condition of every one amongst us ! All things work together for the good of those that love God, and that union of wisdom and power, which no *magnitude can conquer*, and no intricacy *escape*, is ALONE equal to so wonderful a task.

And consider this incessant superintendence and directive providence, wonderful even in the case of an individual, as watching, simultaneously, over thousands and millions of beings like ourselves, in *every people and nation under heaven*, and ministering effectually, from one generation to another, to the salvation of souls. Truly the mind SINKS under the effort to form *anything like a clear or adequate conception* of the mighty attributes essential to a work like this! Yet without it, and *much more*, the universal church of Christ could have no existence *at all*. As a theory of morals, or a system of speculative theology, it might have struggled on with a scanty and miserable being. But as a living soul, a spirit and a power in the hearts and souls of men; as a quickening principle, fermenting, *with a healthy motion*, in the stagnant corruptions of humanity, and preserving it from utter *rottenness*; as a restoration of the lost and earthly to a heavenly vigour of nature,

and an actual triumph over the powers of darkness, and the gates of hell, breathing IMMORTALITY, and coeval with the ages of eternity; it could never have been, or must have perished in the cradle! Thanks be to almighty God, that to Him that loved us, and gave himself for us, have been consigned these high and regal powers. He is *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords*, *going forth, conquering and to conquer*, *till all things shall be subdued under his feet*, and *death and hell are thrown for evermore into the lake of fire*.

Now all this, as the mere statement of *fact*, without any of the aids of eloquence, or an appeal to personal feeling, has something wonderfully striking and magnificent about it, and, even as a mere *speculation*, would be indescribably interesting. But it is not to kindle up the imagination, nor feast the eye, as by a glorious *procession*, by the picture of Messiah's triumph, that I mention it here. For all things in Scripture have, if we would with a true

faith muse on them and receive them in our hearts, a *direct* and INTENDED influence on conduct! Those which *elevate* the soul the most, the most impress a corresponding character on our actions. If the Christian *must* lift up his eyes on high to reach the astonishing facts of revelation, it is not for an *idle gaze*, but that, as *by stars of glory*, he may direct his course by them; and *then move and act* the most when he scans them most intensely.

And here the actual reign of Christ, at THIS INSTANT, over all things, has a most important object and a most practical purpose. Salvation there is ABSOLUTELY NONE *out of Christ Jesus*. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end of our faith, and there is no name under heaven whereby we can be saved, but his! For this purpose, He must not only be an object of *occasional* meditation, or a notion, floating, hither and hither, in the mind. He must not be considered as the mere title of our worship, or a supplementary

name to fill up the end of a prayer. No, nor even as a Saviour merely, whose great act of love towards us has been accomplished ONCE FOR ALL; from thenceforward stript of actual vitality, and existing only in the RESULTS of his one magnificent exploit; as the expiator on the cross indeed, and the Judge on the throne, occupying the two *extremities* of our view, but leaving all the *interval* empty of his Spirit, and a *void* HOLLOW into which the agency of the man God intrudes not in its fullness. No, He must be as a God and kingly Redeemer, *every moment* present, in whom we have a direct and personal interest! And *with the thousand eyes and thousand hands* of ESSENTIAL DEITY, He is acting *on* us, and *with* us, and *for* us, during every instant of our lives.

Doubtless, ONE reason of the manifestation of God in the flesh was to enable the human mind to form those *personal* sympathies, and identify and realize this glorious Being to itself with an actual

intensity of perception! Yet from this, in its hostility to things unseen, when they war with our corruptions and bosom sins, the mind, even of *professed Christians*, constantly and instinctively SHRINKS. To *bring home* Jesus Christ to our *hearts*, and to dwell upon him with this conviction and *sense* of *personality*, is a task most difficult, if not impossible, to the unconverted or half-emancipated soul. But the more entirely we dwell on the various offices which he discharges, the more likely is this perception to be formed. And a consideration of the mediatorial kingdom of the Messiah, and the *actual regal power*, with which he is invested, though not of *itself sufficient* for that purpose, will exercise a most powerful influence to this end. *We must conceive of it*, as a real arrangement in the Almighty's economy, and a change as *actual* as any transfer of authority in a temporal kingdom. Discard, then, the illusion of the *senses*; *fling away* from you

the lusts and carnal darkness which hoodwink your eyes to the power that sways and sustains the universe! **ARISE**, if ye be men and Christians, into that sphere of faith where the Spirit moves **FREELY**, an emancipated Being, with the strength of a giant, and unclouded eye of an angel. The grossness of the world sinks from before you, the awful **INTERIOR** of things is *unveiled*, and the invisible and infinite *bursts out* from behind the covering that folded it round! The tyranny of matter is gone, and the **INEXPRESSIBLE REALITY** and blazing light of spiritual domination **SWALLOW UP THE SOUL**. See, wherever you look, it is *Christ* that meets us—above, below, around you, in you—*Creator, Saviour, Sustainer*, **INFINITE KING**. Ye cannot escape Him. He fills the universe. *He is the universe!* **THOU ART THE KING OF GLORY, O CHRIST!** Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called **Won-**

derful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father!

How many of you, my brethren, blush with a false shame, and a *cowardly* heart, impatient of that cross which is your *glory*, at the utterance, in frequent expressions of tender but reverential love, of that name by which all the family in heaven and in earth are called, and at which *angels* veil their faces, and the *powers of the abyss* TREMBLE. Would you so *dare* to feel, if you carried within you the vivid and treasured consciousness that He to whom it belongs is the very Being who deals out our daily bread, both of *nature* and of *grace*; who is the actual Master of that life which without Him were only a more terrible mode of *death*, and who, with a discretion *boundless*, and strength *uncontrolled*, opens and closes as He pleases the gates of heaven and of hell? *Surely, surely the glory of the ascension might have wiped out the shame of Calvary.* Much more, when the *cross* is but

the symbol of the King immortal and omnipotent! Loyalty to an earthly monarch only grows into an intenser energy from the presence of his enemies; and woe, woe to us, if our loyalty exceed not that of the world!

It is scarcely possible, moreover, that we should be content to go on with a mere loose profession and a dwelling in the *generalities* of Christianity, if we were persuaded, from *the bottom of our souls*, that He, the *singularities* of whose law we blush at, those peculiarities at which the heart of the world loathes and sickens, is the King under whose reign we are momentarily living, to whose power we are unreservedly committed, and whose soul-searching eye readeth the very secrets of our souls. Aye, and He will *himself* be the Judge of the way in which his own holy laws have been observed, and his own blessed example followed. If another were to judge us, we might possibly escape. But where, where can we

flee, when our *Lawgiver* calls us to an account, and He the MIGHTY GOD? “If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand find me, and thy right hand shall hold me!” I cannot think, that with these thoughts, carelessness would be POSSIBLE. And afraid I am that the presentation of Christ, as a LIVING POWER and potentate, the SKIRTS of whose actual presence, even now, among the affairs of men, may, as he moves, by the attentive eye be discerned, is a novel, or, at least, not an *habitual* thought, and an *abiding conviction*, with them who call Him Lord!

We speak of his coming to judge the world in righteousness; but, ALAS! we see not that He is *here already*! The Redeemer, mighty to save, is strong already to punish! He is *here*—his throne is set up in the *midst of us*—and ALREADY, ALREADY He *judgeth* the earth! We

speaking of God's wrath on reprobate Jerusalem, and the Mount Zion which once He loved. We are *right* so to do, but it is not *all the truth*. It was the *Son of man*, the rejected *Messiah*, who, *verily and indeed*, descended in those terrible thunder-clouds, and with his own right hand, and with his holy arm, He gat himself the victory.

We speak, in the hour of deeper conviction than ordinary, of God's visitations on the nations. The famine and the sword and the pestilence we confess to be his ministers. It is true, but *not all the truth*. It is the Lord's *Christ*, already calling the nations to a reckoning for the blood of his saints, and, like the reflection of a distant conflagration, reddening in the horizon, terribly foreshowing the day when his controversy with the earth shall be finished, and *He shall tread out, in his last wrath, the wine-press of almighty God*.

We commit ourselves to *God's provi-*

dence. *We are right* ; but it is exercised, under the present dispensation, THROUGH and BY *Christ*. We speak of his gifts and graces—we *are right*—but from CHRIST they come, and are the regal gifts which He showers, with *both hands open*, on his dutiful children. We pray for God's supporting aid in the hour of *death*—*we are right*. But it is Christ by whom it must be administered, and who holds the staff that must guide us through that black valley. He it is into whose charge the departing spirit is committed, and whom as the righteous seeth, like the blessed Stephen, standing on the right hand of God, his face, with *anticipated glory*, and *the joy of that blessed and loving aspect*, becometh like the face of an angel !

He it is, whom all the world shall obey, before the mediatorial kingdom *closes*. Already the times *grow old*, and the end of all things draweth nigh. Who knows HOW SOON the Judge shall descend, with

the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and shall gather his elect from the four winds, from *one end of heaven to the other* ! Oh ! Lord God, our Saviour and ONLY King, prepare us to meet thee at that, thy last and glorious appearing; and tune our hearts and lips, around thy throne, to the eternal song of Moses and the Lamb ! *Hallelujah ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth ; the kingdoms of the WORLD are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.* Glory be to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever ! HALLELUJAH !

SERMON XVII.

1 COR. xv. 28.—“ And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that *God may be all in all.*”

HERE is plainly declared a change in the government of God toward his creatures, or, at all events, towards the inhabitants of this lower world, who, having been bought by the blood of his Son, and sanctified by his Spirit, shall be raised to the inheritance of the saints in light. And this shall be immediately consequent upon the resurrection from the dead, and the final award of bliss and woe which shall then issue to the wicked and the just, from the mouth of Him that shall sit upon the throne. *God shall be all in all.*

We mean not that the eternal and self-

subsistent Deity, who is, and was, and is to be, in his ineffable and all-containing essence, has suffered, or can suffer, any the minutest change in himself. *If He* could experience the smallest shadow of turning, or diversity in his essence, He would cease to be what he is, God. The universe would have nothing to rest upon ! And being removed from the adamantine and everlasting foundation on which, through all its orders, animate and inanimate, it is built, it would sink into the abyss, and become nothing—mere shadow and emptiness. But, albeit almighty God changes not, *absolutely and in himself*, and admits of no succession, yet there is *succession* in his outward dealings and dispensations ; as, each in its own place and order, they issue forth out of the depths of his secret counsels, and obtain their existence in time.

All things, material and immaterial, are lifted up *into stages* of order and beauty in a ladder whose top is lost in the com-

ing glories of eternity, each higher than the former! And though each, as it mounts into a loftier sphere, grows out of its former self, yet, being in many ways distinct, it involves, necessarily, new laws, and new manifestations of God! And even if, instead of *rising*, a world, material or intellectual, should sink towards the pit, the perfect fitness and harmony of things, ever tending to unity and consistency, still involve a corresponding change in relation to the Godhead.

It is the same sun which pours forth a full flood of light and glory, and makes manifestations of God's creative power in ways inconceivable to us, to the orbs that roll nigh to him; and which sheds a comparatively wan and feeble light upon the planets, which, like our own, with duller energies and a more meagre creation, are further from the fountain of light and life. It is the same sun, in the glories of the sunset, and the power of the noon-day, in the obscurity of the mist or of the cloud, and the thousand diversities to

which, in the eyes of men, his aspect and influences are always subject. The change is *relative*—it lies not in Him, *but in us*.

The world in which we live, though alike in all its forms, under the laws and government of the Supreme, is subject to them, not only with difference of degree, but an essential difference of nature. God looks, with a diverse aspect, upon each of its orders! He lays his almighty hand, with a varying pressure, upon them. Under one set of laws, strictly resistless and mechanical, is put that mysterious work of his creative will, *matter*, the condition, as it would appear, and *substratum* of the universe, from which, by reason of its subtle intercourse with spirit, even souls and intelligences receive their first impressions, and are wakened into consciousness.

Under a constitution, built upon the first, yet greatly more complicated, and in some respects wholly distinct, are placed the *living* things, with which the whole material universe is tenanted and quick-

ened—who have the breath of life, and marvellous instincts within them, but who hold no communication with their Maker, and reflect not his image.

Under yet another constitution dwell all creatures, in whom, though subject to the same laws of life and matter, there is implanted a moral nature, and who, through the strength of a reasoning mind, and the discernment of good and evil, have the faculty of communion with their Maker. Between each of these orders there *lies an abyss*. Each rises above the other, but cannot be *deduced or derived* from the other, — though in the higher natures they are combined together. And each has *its own* laws, its own distinct government, and special relation to the Almighty Maker and Governor.

But in intelligent and moral beings there is not only an *order and gradation*, but a real development. Each stage is the parent of the other. Yet under how different an aspect does God present him-

self, and in how different a *sphere* does the same Spirit move !

Look at the infant, containing indeed the germs of immortality, and a glory above sun or star, taken ere yet its slumbering consciousness is awakened, and put into the loving arms of Christ.

Look at the child, with faculties expanding, yet, with scarce a distant glimpse, here and there, of God, and finding in the countenance and guidance of father and mother, the light which, hereafter, will fall upon it *direct* from its Father which is in heaven !

Look, finally, at the mature man, glancing before and behind, the governor of himself, and, ripening, under the influences of the Spirit, and daily communing with his Lord, into the fulness of the stature of Christ ! How wide apart, though not unrelated, are the spheres in which they move ! How different, in many ways, the government under which they are placed, and the nearness, at least, of

the *felt and conscious relation* in which they stand to God. How much nearer does the saint approach to the vision and recognition of God, as what he will hereafter perfectly be, *all in all*.

Finally, under how different a relation to God, and, in many most important respects, an *opposite government* from Him, do men stand, not only in the same town or village, but within the walls of the same house, and the circles of the same family! To them that love Him God is a *covenanted Father*, and they are his children by adoption and grace. He cherisheth them, and foldeth them in his arms, and by his marvellous grace in Christ Jesus, He maketh *evil good to them*. But to those who love Him not, and who reject Him through whom alone adoption can be attained, God is a wrathful sovereign, and, when the heart hath finally rejected Him, his very blessings are curses. He turneth *all good* unto evil.

Judging, then, even from our own daily experience, and the manifold analogies of

the world about us, we should confidently expect, when the consummation of the existing scheme is come, and the earth itself, in which we live, abolished, a change in God's government over us and our relation to Him, corresponding to the moral and material change.

Vast indeed will be the revolution produced by the final triumph of the God-man.

His throne shall be built up, not only upon his prostrate enemies, but upon the very wrecks and ruins of the world itself, in which the warfare against him and his dominion has been carried on. The whole frame of things, which has been polluted by sin and spiritual wickedness, shall be consumed by fire. Whilst it stands, it is a monument of sin and rebellion. It must be utterly abolished! Along with this utter destruction of his enemies will be accomplished the removal of those evils which have marred the harmony of God's creation, and obscured the marvellous beauty and glory which were poured so

richly over it, as it came from the hands of the Creator ! Sin will be no more ! Sorrow will be no more ! Death will be no more ! They will be cast into the same abyss, which shall open its mouth for him who has been the author of them.

Let us, therefore, consider for a moment how vast a change in the constitution of things this of itself will have produced ! It will be a complete revolution, so far as the moral condition of God's universe, and more especially of our own portion of it, is concerned. We are probably connected in more ways than we know of with the rest of God's creatures ! And as far as we know, it will terminate that distinction between light and darkness, as antagonists fairly matched against each other, which now pervades all earthly things. Wherever we now turn our eyes, we clearly discern the mournful marks of the contest. In the outward world, ruin and desolation, and fierce and turbulent elements, mixed up with glories that tell us of some higher state, and a ravishing

beauty in the order and structure of things! But then the whole of this ruined creation will have passed away, and a new heaven and a new earth have sprung forth into their place. And though there will be a world of woe, formed from all eternity, in God's counsels, for penal suffering, and covered over, not with a glorious garment like the light which now shines on us, but with a funeral shroud, even the blackness of darkness—yet it will stand by *itself*! It will be parted off from the sphere wherein God's presence shall abide.

Again,—in the *world within us* we see the same mixture and confusion of good and evil, the same struggle, the same continual warfare. It makes up our very nature. And, while we long for a change and for the day of our rest, we can hardly conceive the perfect peace and joy which will flow from man being at one with himself and with God! No sin will there then be, nor so much as the possibility of sinning. No contests with God's

enemies, who will have been consigned for evermore to their place of punishment. Good and evil, light and darkness, will be separated by an impassable and eternal gulf. But it is this mixture and confusion of things good and evil, which will thus have ceased to be, which lie at the bottom of all the existing system. It is unintelligible and useless without them. Hence comes the punishment of sin, disease and death. Hence come the inward worm of conscience, and the inflictions of almighty God! Hence come the threatenings and the promises of the ancient saints and prophets, and the Deliverer that was to make all things new! Hence the separation between man and God, and the impossibility of coming into his adorable presence save by a Mediator. Hence the necessity of grace, and the continued help of the Holy Spirit! Hence forms and ordinances, and all the manifold instruments of love, wherewith, through Christ Jesus, our hea-

venly Father worketh within us! Hence the kingdom put into Christ's hand.

But the cause being removed, the effects will cease. Enemies being no more, there needs no power to resist them! And with the mediatorial kingdom will depart the other mediatorial offices. We shall stand toward God, and God will stand toward us, as He doth toward his holy angels, and as He would have done toward us, had Adam never sinned.

1. He now deals with us, not *directly*, but *indirectly*. He is surrounded by unfathomable clouds and darkness, and is utterly, as He is in himself, inaccessible to us. *Through a Mediator* we come to Him! Not so much as a single prayer, or any action of the soul, can come up before Him save on this condition. The more we strive to reach Him and to touch Him, the more He retireth within Himself. Yea, the more do that eternity and infinity which we strive to grasp and lay hold of, and

with curious eyes to contemplate, escape from us! We are lost in the great and empty abyss, which hath neither height, nor depth, nor length, nor breadth, and cannot be measured, nor thought, nor uttered! But then we shall *see Him face to face*. For, sin being removed, the wall of separation is thrown down, and the creature gazes on the Creator, with the eyes of the soul, nay, with the fulness of its being, which will be attracted towards the infinite, and holy, and eternal One! It shall, so to say, with all its faculties, rush to meet Him, and cling to Him, and feed on Him, and be lost in the joy of those adorable perfections, the sense of which shall flow in upon us upon every side, and be the very atmosphere we breathe! There will be no Mediator; but God all in all. For while, on one hand, the Mediator brings us to God, on the other, he may be said to *stand between us and God*, and to veil Him from us.

By what marvellous faculties we shall

thus be enabled to see God, as He is, we can form no conception. But *so* it shall be. God shall shine on us as he does on Christ's humanity! What we *believe* by faith, or love, by thought and reason, we shall then *see*. It *shall be vision*. There shall be the same difference as there is in a blind man, when, by *touch or sound*, he is certain that some one is nigh him; and when, being restored to sight, he sees *directly and immediately*, and the very image of the things, as it were, ENTERS into his soul. For instance, now we *believe* that *out of Him* our own *being* proceeds; that *in Him* we *live and move*. Then we shall *feel* and see that our whole life, that by which we are, issues and is ever issuing from that eternal fountain. We shall still be ourselves, and yet be exquisitely and blessedly conscious that we are *in Him* and *from Him*!

2. In the same way we *believe* that all that is good and holy within us, and *bright* and heavenly, cometh down from the Father

of lights; but *how* we know not. We discern it when within us; but we *SEE* *not* that it issues from Him. Then *we shall see and feel*, not only that our central life, but the graces and holinesses which come and cluster round it, and make it more and more into a glorious image, *are from God*, and a *direct participation of himself* to us—a pouring of himself into us!

3. So in the marvellous works of creation, in which, under innumerable forms, he hath unfolded his power and his wisdom to the gaze of his intelligent creatures, the case shall be the same. Faith already *tells* us that by the word of God the heavens and earth were made! And their voices have gone out into all lands, proclaiming to them that can hear that *God hath formed* them. But then we *shall see Him* working in them, and on them, and sustaining them, and ordering them! So that we shall not merely believe that they are God's, but we shall feel them *to be full of*

Him! They shall all be revelations of *Him* to us. So that they themselves shall be lost in Him whom they image to us. *God shall be all in all!*

And indeed, beautiful and admirable as is the world's order, and the miracles either for use or ornament of which it is full, yet they too, so far as they are *the works of a living God*, are only discerned by us *through the Mediator*. I mean thus. The man without the Gospel, though by the greatness of the mind which Almighty God oftentimes bestows upon them who love Him not, he measures heaven and earth, is able only to discern a beautiful and exquisite machinery, and no more. He sees and *admires the thing* as we admire any piece of fine human art. But he discerns *not the Maker at all*. He does not rise thereby up to *the living God*! Nature is deaf and dumb to him! No glorious person, or heavenly Father, shines in it, or through it, even by glimpses, upon him! He sees a *beautiful thing*, and no

more. Strange it is, but most true, *that* by the Gospel, and that alone, are men brought to discern and love God, even in natural things, in the grandeur of the heavens, the beauties of the earth, and the marvellous order of nature! And we who in faith behold them, do see Him only through that gospel, and the *Mediator*. But whilst through Him we discern this, He yet *stands here too between us* and the immediate sight of God. But when we shall have our glorious bodies on, clothing our sinless spirits, and without any veil between them and the Holy One, we shall behold Him *directly*! The smallest thing that has issued from God's hand shall reflect the full Godhead to us in a clear mirror! *God shall be all in all!*

4. But still more shall it be so in the unfolding of God's *moral* attributes, in the *actual ordering*, not of the material world, which *must*, whether or no, obey Him, but of his *intelligent creatures*! In his wisdom, his goodness, his justice, his love,

in all those awful and adorable attributes which in their diversity, and yet perfect and marvellous union, make up the character of God, *we shall see Him!* We now discern this through and in Jesus Christ, the Mediator, through whom and by whom alone we come to a knowledge of God's moral attributes, in their breadth and perfection! For even in his flesh his heavenly brightness was always shining, and He is the full reflection of God's glory, and the express image of his person! So that, through Christ, is not only the sole approach to his love and favour towards us sinners, but to a *true knowledge of his nature*. When, therefore, we adore his truth, and mercy, and justice, it is as we behold them unfolded in the Redeemer, who is to us, in all things, the representative of the fullness of the Godhead. In Him we first behold them, and *then* refer them to God. But, in our glorified state, we shall see God acting, as He is in himself, in his whole and unspeakable unity. We shall

contemplate Him, not only in his works, as a Creator, but in his dealings as a *Governor*! We shall discern the almighty King, and Judge, and Father, dealing with the intelligent and responsible spirits, who are his children and his subjects; not stocks or stones, but beings with choice and will, and receptacles of everlasting bliss and woe.

5. Then will the mind, therefore, cease to be lost in mazes and difficulties. Contradictions shall be reconciled; the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain! A flood of light shall be poured upon all the ways of our heavenly Father, though his paths be now in the sea, and his footsteps in the great waters. From the first eternal counsel and predetermination in the mind of God, to its final carrying out into entire accomplishment, all shall be revealed, in its full harmony, of wisdom, and power, and love, and truth. We shall behold Him not in clouds, but in light—no longer acting by a Mediator,

but the whole unveiled God, and omnipotent Governor, ordering all things gloriously and effulgently, and as HIMSELF. *God shall be all in all.*

6. And this brings me to another point, which, in fact, lies at the bottom of much that I have been saying. *One* great office which God in the flesh, Jesus, man and God, performs for the souls of men is this. Ever looking upon Him in this his human person conjoined to the divine, and the very image of God, we are enabled, in some sort, to apprehend and realize the *Godhead to ourselves*. We can lay hold upon Him. We can almost grasp Him with our hands. We can think of Him, come to Him, speak to Him, and deal with Him as a real person. He ceases to be, what to most men He is, a *shadow*, vast, and mighty, and awful, but still a shadow. Such is the weakness of the human mind. So bound down is it by the senses, and the miserable outward world which it sees and touches, and in

which it dwells, that, in most cases, it becomes feeble and helpless, like a child, for things beyond the sphere of the touch and sight. When you bid it look up out of the prison of the senses, and free itself from the flesh, and think on God, the infinite Spirit, it makes a few efforts to enlarge itself, and then sinks down to the ground exhausted and helpless! He that filleth heaven and earth, and is, and was, and is to be! He who hath no limbs, nor members, nor anything to which He can be likened, who not only embraceth and sustaineth all things, but is whole in every place! who can figure Him to himself? Who can conceive and bring home to his thoughts, being dust and ashes, the Infinite and Eternal?

Yet, all men are not alike in this. The saints of old *walked* with God, and He was their God, not a shadow, nor a mere unlimited infinitude which they could not realize, but an actual personal God, in whom they lived. They succeeded in re-

alizing Him. So do many now without other help. But any how for *most* Christians, the living person of Christ, in its definite shape of flesh and blood, is a great assistance. It fixes their thoughts and affections upon God tangibly, and it *actualizes* Him to their hearts and souls. I do not mean that it does so by giving them a *notion* of God's unspeakable perfections and attributes, of which I have spoken before ; but as something which, so to say, they may look at, in their inward souls, and *touch*, through force of a holy fancy, in meditation and prayer ! Even the highest, purest souls, whom the grace of God has ever sanctified upon earth, with the holiest hearts, and largest understandings, feel the inestimable blessing which, in the visible *person* of the man Christ Jesus, God has given them ! A point it is whereon to fix their thoughts and affections, to help their infirmities, and ease the dazzled eyes from the splendour of the unlimited Godhead. We want some-

thing round which and in which to collect the scattered attributes of God; *one fixed substance*, and circumscribed shrine in which they may dwell, and we may reach them. And even such a central point is Christ.

And formed as our faculties now are, with all the help which we receive from Him, and the communication of the graces of his Spirit, we cannot, even in mind or thought, *apprehend God*. Even when, from contemplating the Redeemer's person, we have inferred and gathered up his attributes, we cannot lay hold in mind on the LIVING PERSON. We can rise, even at the best, little beyond the visible Mediator! It is *partly on Him* we fix our thoughts, partly on something which we cannot wholly realize, to which He dimly leads us. But *God is not all in all*, as He will hereafter become to us. And I say *to us*, because in himself he is fixed and unalterable, and hath neither change in Him, nor even the shadow of turning. It is we who

change, and not He, as, by the purification of our spirits, and the enlargement of our faculties, through Christ Jesus, we become able to love Him more, and even to gaze upon Him as He is.

And this brings me to the last point. It is equally certain that the Divine substance is unspeakable and perfect unity; yet that it hath within it three persons, not *in name*, but *in reality*, yet constituting but one living God. This awful and blessed truth it is, which not only lieth at the bottom of the gospel, but animates and pervades it, and penetrates it, and makes it, what it is to us, the power of God unto salvation. We live upon it. We live in it. It is on us and round about us, and without it the soul dies. God the Father who made us, God the Son who redeemed us, God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth us! behold the sum of the Christian's faith. But what we believe, and, in its relation to ourselves, for practical purposes apprehend, we cannot

grasp *in itself*, or behold in its oneness and glory. We behold God, so to say, *alternately and separately*, in each of the three adorable persons—in the Father, the Son, and the blessed and sanctifying Spirit. If we look at them in their oneness, the triple personality escapes us. If we contemplate the three persons, our feeble understandings fail to lay hold on the Unity. Children as we are, we are only able to lisp a great mystery, and to receive, without comprehending them, the first and simplest elements of the truth. But, if we may reverently say so, as it is with *a ray of light*, so it is with the unspeakable and adorable Godhead. The ray may be divided into several parts, each in itself *capable of being contemplated* alone. And yet the parts are such, that, unless they be united together, they do not constitute the pure and living light. So Almighty God is not the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, *separately*, though *separately*, we may consider them ;

but *all together*, in one unspeakable unity. And this Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity it is, which with all humility of soul, and love, and reverence, the Church worshippeth from the beginning until now. "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," is her song of praise and thanksgiving.

But what Christ has revealed to us, he does yet here again, to our feeble apprehension, in some *sort obscure*. We cannot gaze upon the full and triune God! But it is so only for a time, till, the present dispensation being accomplished, and all the enemies of Christ being put under his feet, *God shall be all in all!* And yet we shall not have lost Christ even in the blaze of the Godhead, for He remaineth the same Immanuel! He will be no more, indeed, the Mediator between God and man, no more the sovereign of the mediatorial kingdom, no more the Judge of the quick and the dead, no more the channel through which we discern and come to God! For

all *that* will have passed away into a new and more glorious order of things, growing out of it, nevertheless, and depending upon it! He cannot, therefore, be to us exactly what He was during our earthly pilgrimage, or during our intermediate state, among the spirits waiting for the judgment; or even what He was, at the moment of the resurrection, when we became like Him, from beholding Him, even as He was! But yet, doubtless, He will be the instrument of unspeakable bliss, and exaltation to us. He will be bound to *us*, whom, in his earthly estate, He redeemed by his blood, by ties of unutterable and eternal love!

Nay, albeit He reigns and will ever reign over other intelligences, and innumerable hosts of angels, and in Him the things in heaven and things in earth are united into one, yet shall *we*, *for whom* He actually died, be still peculiarly his. He will be to us, for evermore, the Lamb *that was slain*. We shall be to Him the peo-

ple whom He hath purchased by his own flesh and blood. Glorious and mighty things, in the depths of that spiritual world, and that coming and inexhaustible eternity, still remain to be accomplished by Him who is God and man, though He hath laid down his earthly and temporary dominion, *and God is all in all!* Out of that fountain of redeeming blood streams of healing will pour forth for evermore, through that sacrifice, full, and sufficient, once accomplished upon the cross. Through immeasurable ages, and countless worlds, the glory of it will continue to resound, and the song of Moses and the Lamb will never die away. Generation after generation of glorified spirits will still carry it on. And still they shall answer, "Hallelujah! Amen." And perhaps, it may be the *special task* of us who have been redeemed out of our lost estate into a more than angelical glory, to carry the tidings of what God did for us from sphere to sphere. And by this proclamation of the awfulness

of sin, and the vastness of that unspeakable mercy and bloody sacrifice, we may be, under God, the blessed instruments of preserving other worlds from falling, and other beautiful creations from being changed into a hell, and a place of torment. What an eternity awaits us, brethren ! what an inheritance ! what a succession of never-ending glories, if so be that, by an evil heart of unbelief, we lose not that which the blood of Christ has purchased for us !

THE END.

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